



FOCUS

MAR 1 1990

Newsletter for the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence

Volume 4, Number 1

Spring 1989

The Spirit Weeps ... an excerpt

Our people are in our midnight.

*We'll come into our daylight
and become leaders,*

When the eagle lands on the moon.

Hopi prophecy, circa 1850

On June 29, 1969, when astronauts landed on the moon, the message they sent back to earth was: "The Eagle has landed." In that week, the first Native alcohol program opened in North America. These programs have been the leaders bringing us out of our midnight of residential schools, alcoholism and family breakdown. Our people are losing their sense of powerlessness, and actively engaging substance abuse problems.

Alcoholism has been the most visible sign of dysfunction in our communities and has received the most attention from both government and Native communities.

As substance abuse is reduced, violence and sexual abuse issues become more prominent. These problems existed while there was excessive drinking, of course, but they were often not talked about because people believed the myth that the alcohol was causing these other forms of abuse. As the alcohol is removed, violence and sexual abuse issues must be dealt with, not only for their own sake, but to help stabilize the new-found

increase in the number of disclosures of child sexual abuse. Therefore the planners of programs to drastically reduce alcoholism should also set up treatment plans to deal with an increase in sexual abuse reports.

In order to understand some of the present day factors which have impact on



Native families experiencing family violence and child abuse, it is helpful to have some knowledge of the historical context from which Native people have emerged.

The imposition of European beliefs, values and policies is still affecting Native people today. The treaties signed in the 1870s secured lands from Ontario to Alberta for the Dominion of Canada and effectively removed the Native population from mainstream society onto reserves. From 1925 to 1951, the Indian Act banned political organizing including traditional gatherings, such as Potlaches and Sundances.

Assimilation was government policy, which determined that over time Native people would be taught the values and skills of the dominant society, in order to "civilize" them. The policy was aimed at the young and carried out in the context of religion and education. The mandate for implementing it was given to the missionaries who established, first, industrial schools and then residential schools. Many Indian children spent their entire childhood in residential schools, seeing their families only once or twice a year. In more recent times, many Native children were removed from their families by child welfare officials and placed in non-Native foster homes, sometimes far away from their homes.

Separation of the children, culturally and geographically, from parents and their way of life has had a drastic impact on almost all Indian families. Parenting skills diminished as succeeding generations became more and more institutionalized and experienced little nurturing. Low self-esteem and self-concept problems arose as children were taught that their own culture was inferior and uncivilized, even "savage." Consequently, confusion about culture, heritage and tradition is a major

Continued on page 2

Inside

The Spirit Weeps cont'd	2
Did You Know?	3
Community News	4
Video Reviews	5
Calendar of Events	6

GOV

DOC

CA2

AL

SS

F511

v.4-5

1989-

1991

LAW

ative alcoholics are
if they are untreated
sexual abuse they

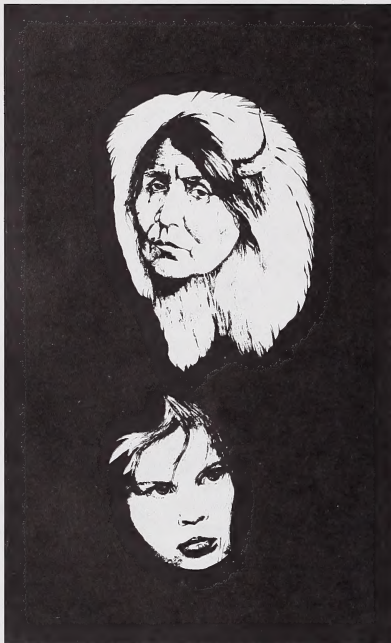
s which have
g a high rate of
xperience an

The Spirit Weeps continued

issue for many Native people. This, combined with high unemployment, little education and feelings of powerlessness have contributed to the devastating problems of alcoholism, family violence and sexual abuse in Native communities.

For years, to our great disadvantage, we have tried to close up and hide the sexual abuse issue; we have tried to envelop the problem. Now we must choose the opposite road; to open it up, and develop treatment approaches. The need to treat sexual abuse problems is identified everywhere by caregivers in Native communities, who are not only hearing disclosures of it from the youth in their communities, but are also seeing its symptoms: depression, suicide, dysfunctional school behavior, juvenile delinquency and promiscuity. If we truly want to deal with the pain of our children's spirit, we must develop effective sexual abuse treatment programs. To succeed in the Native community, these programs must be community-based. Yet, the multifaceted issues of caregivers, families and community grieving can seriously inhibit the effective development of such an approach.

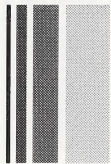
Many Native caregivers, trying to learn more about sexual abuse so that they can assist their clients, are discovering their own pain from growing up in homes impacted by alcoholism and/or being abused themselves. The emotional turmoil experienced by untreated caregivers/victims complicates every aspect of their attempts to deliver care to other victims or offenders who need help. Therefore, serious consideration should be given to the clinical assessment of local caregivers to ensure that their own treatment is set up



prior to the development of a program which aims to help them assist others.

The biggest issue facing the community-based service giver is pressure from the extended family not to report abuse within that family system. In some situations, Native caregivers are faced with the problem of dealing with disclosures of sexual abuse in which the perpetrator is a member of the caregiver's extended family. Caregivers also face difficult choices when sexual abuse is disclosed by child victims who do not want anything done about it. They do not want the perpetrator to go to jail because he is a family member or another person in the community. As difficult as it may be, caregivers must do what is necessary to protect these children so they do not feel betrayed once again by adults; so they do not respond by pulling into themselves, feeling more alone with their anger, pain, guilt and shame.

Grieving is another issue that affects Native communities and caregivers. Due to high rates of alcoholism, violence, death, separations and children going to government care, many people in our communities become locked in the anger stage of grieving. A sense of powerlessness becomes pervasive and people become "other-directed" with their anger. They blame the Chief and Council, government, or other clans. Agencies blame each other for the collective pain in the community, and everyone mistrusts everyone else. Because Native communities are often small grieving issues can have depressive effects on all the resi-



Did You Know?

dents. These can potentially hinder setting up an effective response to the problem.

If the community is to help people, the treatment programs they set up must utilize both existing local resources and assistance from provincially funded outside treatment programs for offenders and their families. This is not to suggest that those provincial programs must be delivered in the Native community. They can assist by training local people to develop their own treatment programs, or by jointly operating programs.

It is imperative that the non-Native professionals who plan to assist gain an appreciation of the *collective thought* or sense of community which exists in Native communities, given the extended family system. Understanding how community-mindedness can be harnessed to support the effort of caregivers can increase the probability of success of any program. Whatever strategy is undertaken, there must be *mutual respect* between outside agencies and the Native community when setting up programs.

The progress we have made towards establishing and maintaining sobriety among our people is an important first step. The next one is dealing with the problem of sexual abuse within our communities. We must begin by abandoning the three rules of denial: "Don't Talk, Don't Feel, Don't Trust," and by acknowledging collective grief and the issues of caregivers/victims. When we have done this, and made the extended family our truly greatest strength, we shall emerge from our midnight into daylight, becoming the leaders we are capable of being.

*Material from The Spirit Weeps by
Maggie Hodgson and Brenda Daily,
edited by Gerry Kilgannon.*

■ In January 1988, Iskewew opened its doors in the Indian-Metis Friendship Centre in **Prince Albert, Saskatchewan**. The establishment of Iskewew (the word means women in Cree) grew out of an awareness that Native women using the emergency shelter in Prince Albert needed ongoing support in the city after leaving the shelter. Iskewew offers support groups at two levels; the first level offering support and advocacy and the second level taking the form of a mutual help group as the women move towards the agency's goal of empowerment.

■ The Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre in **Winnipeg** offers support services and resources to Native children and their families in the urban community. When the staff realized that domestic violence was a central problem for 80% of their clients, the centre proposed the establishment of a Native-controlled, community-based organization to provide advocacy and resource programs for abused Native women. Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin (Women Helping One Another) now offers emergency shelter and other services to abused aboriginal women in Winnipeg.

■ The Native Education Centre in **Vancouver** is operating a two and a half year demonstration project aimed at equipping Native people to provide counselling to clients with problems in the area of family violence and to deliver education programs about family violence to Native people. A condensed version of the training program will be offered at the centre beginning in January. For more information, call (604) 873-3761 or write to 285 East Fifth Avenue, Vancouver, B.C.

■ The **Alberta** government has taken two initiatives which will enable it to work more closely with Native people. A year and a half ago, an agreement was signed with the **Metis Association of Alberta** which establishes a structure for joint planning and action. The association has expressed an interest in being more involved in the area of child welfare as well as many other government programs and services. A **Provincial Advisory Committee on Native Issues** was established last December by the former Minister of Social Services. The committee will act in an advisory capacity to the Minister of Family and Social Services in matters that relate to the Native community in Alberta.

■ Native people representing elders, youth, women and the general population from 34 communities in the western Arctic attended a conference on child sexual abuse last January in **Yellowknife**. They discussed what needs to be done to prevent the abuse from happening and what treatment services are needed for those affected by the abuse. For more information, contact Alice Hill at (403) 873-5509.

■ In September, the **Chiefs and Councils of B.C.** will attend a seminar on child sexual abuse. They will be given an overview of the issue with an emphasis on crisis intervention and community treatment programs from a policy perspective.



Community News

Northeast

The **Cold Lake First Nation** near Grand Centre held a six-day community workshop in March during which a variety of troublesome issues including suicide, alcoholism and family violence were examined. The first two days focused on matters of concern to youths and featured talks and improvisational drama. The remainder of the time was spent hearing presentations, role playing and discussing the issues within the framework of the chosen theme of family unity and community growth. Since the workshop the community has started its own support group for victims of family violence. Other follow-up activities are continuing.

Calgary

Since April 1973, the **Blackfoot Indian Band** has administered its own child welfare services under a tripartite agreement with the federal and provincial governments. In 1986, following the passage of a new Child Welfare Act which recognized the unique needs of Native children, the Blackfoot Social Services Society was formed to administer the Child Welfare Program, the Day Care Program and Family and Community Support Services. A major objective of the Child Welfare Program is to relate the

delivery of child protection and family and children's services to Blackfoot traditions, language, culture and life-style. Two of the five current program objectives are to support and strengthen families and reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect.

Edmonton

A survey was conducted recently on the **Paul Indian Band** near Duffield by the Band Counselling Services to determine the knowledge and attitudes of the people about family violence. Respondents were also asked what they thought would help stop or prevent the violence from happening. Many excellent suggestions were made. A regular discussion group has begun and plans are underway to offer several more of the programs suggested.

The **Grande Cache** Transition House Society has received funding from the Canadian Job Strategy Program, the Town of Grande Centre and I.D. 16 to hire several workers, two of whom will be Native. One Native person will work out of Siska Creek with the Metis communities in the area developing prevention and support programs.

Central

The **O'Chiese Indian Band** near Rocky Mountain House is preparing a proposal for a long-term project to address the problem of family violence.

A Native drama group, 4-Winds Theatre, located on the **Hobbema Indian Reserve**, has developed a drama about family violence using puppets, which they have presented at Saddle Lake, Strathmore, Grande Cache and Hobbema. For information about the drama write Box 912, Hobbema, Alberta, T0C 1N0 or phone the group at (403) 585-3904.

South

The **Blood Band** Department of Health is preparing a proposal and will be seeking funding for a family violence awareness and prevention program. The Band, located in the Standoff area, has been exploring the feasibility of building a crisis centre on the Reserve.

A family violence survey was recently completed on the **Piegán Reserve** located at Brocket near Pincher Creek. The survey report is being studied to determine what action should be taken.

Video Reviews

Northwest

Eight child care workers from the group home run by the **Swan River Indian Band** on their reserve near Kinuso have completed the Child Protection Services Training offered by Alberta Family and Social Services. A ninth worker is nearing completion of the training.

Recently the **Boyer River and Tallcree Indian Bands** near Fort Vermilion invited the elders on their reserves to come together to talk about family betterment from a cultural perspective. The elders were encouraged to look at how family and community problems would have been handled in the past. Elders Councils have now been established and are available for consultation by the Chiefs and Councils.

A two-day workshop on child sexual abuse was held on the **Driftpile Reserve** March 29 and 30. The majority of the participants were young people under 25 years. A follow-up session is planned for the fall.

The following five videos have been made about family violence by and for Native people.

All Our Business

This 30-minute VHS video was produced by Seneca Productions at the Caughnawaga Indian Reserve in Quebec. It tells the story of an abused woman living on an Indian reserve who, despite the fact that she tries to keep her abuse a secret, is helped by a family of caring neighbors. The video emphasizes the point that abuse is not a private family matter. It is everybody's business. *Available from Alberta Family and Social Services Library, Edmonton*

The following videos are available from Native Counselling Services of Alberta, 800, 10010 - 106 Street, Edmonton, (403) 423-2141.

Battered Women

Part I, 8 minutes

This short video gives an overview of the problem of wife abuse in the Native community. It includes an historical view.

Part II, "Where Do I Go?" 10 minutes

This follow-up to Part I gives information about assistance that was available in Alberta when the film was made a few years ago.

Stepping Out

Part I, A Silhouette Interview with Sheila, 15 minutes

Sheila, a Native woman, tells of the hurt and torment she suffered in an abusive relationship and how an attempt on her life made her realize the seriousness of her situation. She describes how concern for her children motivated her to leave.

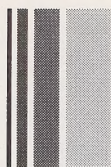
Part II, Interview with Leanne and Willy, 30 minutes

This video features interviews with two Native people about their previous abusive relationships. Willy talks about his own abusive behavior and tells how he is struggling to change the way he relates to women. Leanne, a former battered woman tells about her former relationship, why she left it and how she too is struggling to build a new life.

In 1986 the National Film Board released a series of three films about wife abuse (available in both video and 16 mm film). One of the series focuses on responses to the problem of wife abuse in rural and isolated communities.

A Safe Distance

This video includes depictions of responses in two communities serving Native people. One story is about a Native woman from Northern Manitoba using the services of the women's shelter in Thompson. The other story shows a group of Native women living on the West Bay Reserve in Northern Ontario building a women's centre on the Reserve.



Calendar of Events

July 11 - 14 Regina

A Symposium on the Family

Contact: Symposium, Saskatchewan Social Services
1920 Broad St.
Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 3V6
1-800-667-7197

July 26 - 30 Acapulco, Mexico

Fifth World Congress of Victimology

Contact: World Congress
2333 North Vernon Street
Arlington, Virginia, USA 22207
(703) 536-1750

August 29 - 31 Slave Lake, Alberta

Moving Forward: Indian Control of Community Health

Contact: Lesser Slave Lake Regional Council
High Prairie, Alberta
(for Treaty 8 people only)

September 24 - 27 Toronto, Ontario

Focus on Child Abuse: Facing the Challenges Together

Contact: Dorothy Malcolm/Evelyn Petryniak
The Institute for the Prevention of Child Abuse
25 Spadina Road
Toronto, Ontario M5R 2S9
(416) 921-3151

September 28 - 30 Grande Prairie, Alberta

New Perspectives on Sexual Abuse

Contact: P.A.C.E.
201, 10118 - 101 Avenue
Grande Prairie, Alberta T8V 0Y2
(403) 539-6692

October 19 - 21 Lethbridge, Alberta

National Symposium on Aboriginal Women in Canada

Contact: Prof. Christine Miller
University of Lethbridge
4401 University Drive
Lethbridge, Alberta T1K 3M4
(403) 329-2244

October 26 - 27 Calgary, Alberta

Child Sexual Abuse: The State of Knowledge in Prevention, Treatment and Research

Contact: Faculty of Continuing Education
University of Calgary
2500 University Drive S.W.
Calgary, Alberta T2N 1N4

Notice

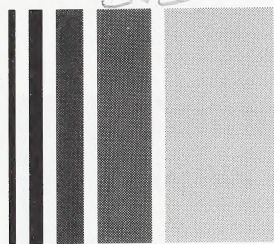
The Office for the Prevention of Family Violence will be contacting Native communities and organizations in the summer of 1989 to ask how the services of the office can better meet the needs of Native people.

FOCUS is a quarterly publication of the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence. Submissions for future issues, especially news about community activities, are welcome. To put your name on the mailing list or for additional copies, contact the office. Address all correspondence to:
The Office for the Prevention of Family Violence
Alberta Family and Social Services
10030 - 107 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 3E4 (403) 422-5916

**FAMILY
PREVENTION
VIOLENCE**

Alberta

FAMILY AND SOCIAL SERVICES



FOCUS

Newsletter for the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence

Volume 4, Number 2

Fall 1989

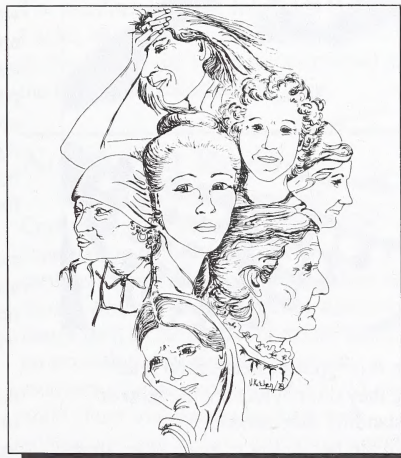
Double Isolation: The Case of the Abused Immigrant Woman

"I really didn't know what to do. I couldn't tolerate the beatings anymore. When my husband started talking about hurting the kids, I knew I had to do something. In my situation, finding help was not easy since I could barely speak any English. People in my community didn't want to hear about my problem; they said that what goes on between a husband and a wife is a private matter. Somebody suggested I call the police, but in the country where I come from the police usually create more problems than they solve. The day came when I realized the only way to end the violence was to leave my husband. I knew my community wouldn't approve because, like them, I also believed that a woman's place was with her husband no matter what. When I got to the battered women's shelter, everybody tried very hard to help me, but the fact that I came from another culture and didn't understand English well made things quite difficult. I felt very isolated. I felt like I didn't belong anywhere."

As with rural, native and disabled women, immigrant women who are victims of violence within their families often have to surmount additional obstacles to break the cycle of violence.

Isolation is a common characteristic of all abused women and this is often felt to an even greater extent by immigrant women who possess little or no knowledge of both Canada's official languages. Information on wife abuse in other languages is limited and this makes it difficult for some women to know where to go for help in time of crisis.

When immigrant women do manage to locate the appropriate resources, the language barrier they face often prevents



them from getting the help they most need. In addition, misconceptions about issues specific to the women's cultures and lack of knowledge about family violence dynamics among helping organizations add to the misunderstandings facing many immigrant women reaching out for help.

In a study sponsored by the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, the researcher found that workers (whether they be shelter, government, ethno-cultural or settlement agency workers) who have trained in and experienced both "the dynamics of family violence and cross-cultural differences" are rare. Workers generally have one or the other, but not both.

The Mennonite Centre study supports the findings of another study done in Toronto entitled "Alternatives to Assault: The Utilization of Emergency Shelters by Immigrant Women in Toronto" where it was found that some service providers' own biases toward women from other cultures tended to further alienate the immigrant women they were trying to help. This can happen when service providers assume that all immigrant women share the same values, beliefs and needs or that all immigrant women are poor, uneducated, and unaware of Canadian culture and lifestyles.

Immigrant women may have different levels of income and education. The length of time they have spent in Canada varies and consequently, may affect the way they perceive themselves as immigrants. Some speak English, while others do not. Some are sponsored, while others are not. For some, coming to Canada has meant leaving behind status, possessions and family members. For others, it has meant escaping conditions of war and torture.

Continued on page 2

Inside

Double Isolation cont'd	2
Did You Know?	3
Community News	5
Video Reviews	5
Calendar of Events	6

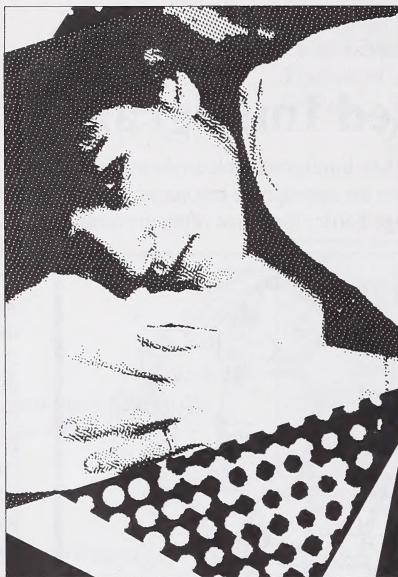
Double Isolation continued

For women who come to Canada under their husbands' sponsorship, the threat of deportation in cases of marriage breakdown is very frightening. Although immigration officials have been advised to be lenient in such situations, a woman can be deported if her husband is convicted of a criminal offense and sentenced to more than six months.

Sponsorship also means that in some areas the immigrant women do not have the same rights and privileges as other Canadian women. As a sponsored immigrant, she finds herself "dependent" legally and economically on the man who abuses her. This may also make it more difficult for the immigrant woman to access services and benefits normally available to Canadian citizens.

For many of these reasons, abused immigrant women are in a particularly vulnerable position as far as legal matters are concerned. Immigrant women need culturally sensitive advocates to help them through the legal maze and ensure they have appropriate information about their rights. This is of primary concern to immigrant women worried about custody issues. Some husbands have taken advantage of women's ignorance of the law to keep them from leaving. They sometimes threaten to kidnap the children or make their wives believe that they would automatically lose their rights to their children if they left.

Some immigrant women also do not feel confident in the help they can get from legal authorities, especially the police. Many of them have come from police states where they have learned and experienced that the authorities are to be feared rather than trusted. Others have lost



faith in this type of intervention after feeling they did not receive the help or understanding they needed.

We are beginning to learn more about the needs and unique problems faced by immigrant women who are abused. Through such studies as the one at the Mennonite centre and others in Canada, ways of improving our response are being proposed.

Some studies have suggested that the answer would be to create a battered women's shelter for immigrant women as exists in some Canadian communities. However, opinions vary on the need for such a shelter. Some argue that this type of shelter would further segregate immigrant women from mainstream society and reinforce their feelings of isolation and of being "different." Others suggest that the specific needs of immigrant women going to shelters could be better answered by having multi-lingual and multi-cultural staff in existing shelters.

People, involved through their work or otherwise, with family violence in immigrant communities seem to agree that mainstream agency workers need to recognize their own biases toward other cultures and work on changing these attitudes. They also need to become more aware of cross-cultural issues and particularly those issues specific to immigrant women. It is important for ethno-cultural and immigrant settlement organizations to become more knowledgeable about the particular dynamics of wife abuse and appropriate ways of counselling victims. Agencies will then be able to respond better to abused women who come forward.

Communities, as well, need to examine their own attitudes and beliefs about family violence and find ways to reach out and support immigrant women who are victims of violence.

Although much more needs to be done to address the problem of wife abuse in immigrant communities, many groups, locally and nationally, have introduced creative ways to increase awareness and improve our response to these families.

The struggle to dissolve the double isolation experienced by immigrant women has been difficult. However, through the increasing interest and commitment on the part of government and community, our response to these women is improving. Only through this combined understanding of the unique needs of immigrant women and willingness on the part of service providers to adequately respond, will immigrant women reach out for the help they need.

Suzanne Lacroix

Did You Know?

■ The Alberta Network of Immigrant Women is currently developing a position paper reflecting the concerns of immigrant women affected by the problem of family violence. The paper will seek to demonstrate existing gaps in services and information to abused immigrant women. For additional information contact Christine Lasalle at 426-1744.

■ The Office for the Prevention of Family Violence in collaboration with the Department of Career Development and Employment, Settlement Services have developed a brochure for abused immigrant women entitled "I Want the Violence to Stop." The brochure is available in five different languages: English, Chinese, Polish, Spanish and Vietnamese and can be obtained at no charge by contacting the office at 422-5916.

■ The upcoming issue of The English Express newsletter will include a revised version of the wife abuse insert entitled "Wife Abuse: Home Can be a Dangerous Place" that was first published in the June, 1988 issue. Free copies may be ordered from: Bev Burke, Community Programs, 10th Floor, Devonian Building, 11160 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, T5K 0L3.

■ Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW) have published a series of three brochures on wife assault, sexual assault and child sexual abuse in English, Chinese and Punjabi. To obtain copies of the brochures, contact: Monique Gionet, WAVAW/Rape Crisis Centre, #204, 636 West Broadway Street, Vancouver, B.C., V5Z 1G2, (604) 875-1328.

■ The Shirley Samaroo House is the first shelter in Metro Toronto specifically built to serve the needs of immigrant women. The unique aspect of this shelter is that it provides specialized services for immigrant women in a culturally sensitive environment. The shelter staff is multi-ethnic and multilingual (416) 249-4364/249-7095.

■ "You Are Not Alone" is a slide tape or video (VHS) which provides immigrant women with information on wife assault. It is designed for use in a variety of settings including English as a Second Language classes, women's shelters and community agencies, available in English, Italian, Hindi, Portuguese, Vietnamese and Spanish. For more information contact: Resource Centre, Ministry of Citizenship, 9th Floor, 77 Bloor Street West, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 2R9, (416) 963-2914.

■ Maria De America Association for Spanish-speaking Women of Alberta organized a one-day workshop on the topic of family violence for Spanish-speaking women last April in Edmonton. Monica Riutort, co-author of the handbook "Working with Assaulted Immigrant Women" and Suzanne Lacroix from the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence were the guest speakers. Monica Riutort also offered an evening training session on how to work with battered immigrant women.

This association is also planning to establish a support group for immigrant women affected by violence at home. The group will be open to all immigrant women.

New office address: #808, 10136 - 100 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T5J 0P1, Telephone: 426-1744.

■ The Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton published a brochure on sexual assault available in three different languages: English, Polish and Spanish. Work has begun on the Chinese, Vietnamese, Punjabi and Urdu translations. Copies of the brochures can be obtained by calling the centre at 423-4121.

■ Women who are pregnant or those with a one to six week-old infant and who have been physically abused as a child are presently being sought for a study on the cycle of abuse. Confidentiality is ensured. If you would like to participate in this study or know of anyone who would, please contact Elizabeth White-MacDonald in Edmonton at 435-0879.

■ The federal government organized and hosted a National Forum on Family Violence in Ottawa on June 18 to 21, 1989. The forum was part of the government's family violence initiative announced in June 1988. The main objective of the forum was to bring together individuals from across Canada in order to provide input into the development of a long-term national strategy to combat family violence. Proceedings of the conference are expected to be available in November from the Family Violence Prevention Division, Health and Welfare Canada.

Book Review

■ As a follow-up to the National Workshop on Child Sexual Abuse and The National Forum on Family Violence, the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence organized a consultation on October 17. The forty Alberta delegates who attended the two national meetings discussed how the federal government could assist Alberta in responding to family violence.

■ Since May 1989, children anywhere in Canada can access THE KIDS HELP PHONE which provides telephone counselling, information and referral services to children experiencing a wide variety of problems, including child abuse. This service is available free of charge 24 hours a day, and can be accessed by dialing 1-800-668-6868.

■ The Provincial Association of Transition Houses Saskatchewan (PATHS) is participating in a new Family Violence Working Group. The group is composed of representatives of Treaty Indian women, rural women, Metis women, immigrant women, disabled women, transition houses, sexual assault centres and the Battered Women's Advocacy Network. The group is to be a forum for doubly disadvantaged women to share their experiences and discuss solutions (source: VIS-A-VIS, summer 1989).

■ The criminal justice system's involvement in family violence was the subject of a seminar held by The National Associations Active in Criminal Justice (NAACJ) in Ottawa in February. The meeting helped participants clarify the critical issues surrounding family violence and the law. Proceedings of the seminar are available.

Contact:
Ben Offman
Executive Secretary
NAACJ
4th Floor
55 Parkdale Avenue
Ottawa, Ontario K1Y 1E5
(613) 725-3715

■ Education Wife Assault has published a brochure entitled "My Husband is Beating Me — I Want Him to Stop." This brochure is available in eight languages including English, Chinese, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Punjabi, Spanish and Vietnamese. To obtain copies of the brochure, contact: Education Wife Assault, 427 Bloor Street West, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 1X7, (416) 968-3422.

■ The Centre for Spanish Speaking People of Toronto has produced a wife assault information kit in Spanish/English for female victims of wife assault and related agencies working with them. The kit contains two handbooks, one poster and four fact sheets on legal issues. For more information contact the centre at: 5824 College Street, Toronto, Ontario M6G 1B3, (416) 533-8545.

Violence Against Immigrant Women and Children — An Overview for Community Workers

by Kathy Wiebe, Vancouver, British Columbia. Women Against Violence Against Women/Rape Crisis Centre, 1985

Although this handbook discusses at length, the topics of wife and child abuse, its main purpose is to sensitize and inform service providers about the dynamics facing immigrant families affected by family violence. It aims to create an awareness of particular factors encountered by immigrant women such as: language barriers, issues of sponsorship, integration into Canadian society, cultural values and beliefs among others. The author emphasizes that the most suitable intervention is reached when community workers take into account those particular dynamics and try to see the immigrant woman's world through her eyes.

Working with Assaulted Immigrant Women: A Handbook for Lay Counsellors

by Monica Riutort and Shirley Endicott Small. Toronto, Ontario: Education Wife Assault, 1985

Although professionally trained individuals can benefit from this handbook, it is primarily designed for lay counsellors and paraprofessionals working with assaulted immigrant women.

The authors give an overview of specific issues facing immigrant women, who are in an abusive situation, and stress that counsellors should keep these issues in mind when working with immigrant women.

Finally, they suggest counsellors emphasize the criminal nature of wife assault and dispel the myths surrounding the abuse.



Community News

Edmonton Region

"Home is Where the Hurt is. Family Violence can be stopped" is the slogan chosen by the Edmonton Family Violence Treatment, Education and Research Centre for their advertising project in LRT stations. The message, translated in various languages including French, Chinese, Vietnamese, Spanish, and Cree appears, as space permits, in the downtown LRT stations.

The Mennonite Centre for Newcomers is nearing completion of a project entitled "Proyecto Soledad," aimed at breaking the silence of Latin American women regarding wife abuse. To this end, they have developed a self-guided workshop package and a group-created video. For more information contact: Adrienne Wiebe at 424-7709.

Calgary Region

The Calgary Coalition on Family Violence is undertaking a project on family violence that is designed to address the gaps in services for abused immigrant women. Work is already underway to launch a multilingual poster campaign and develop and deliver three training resource packages. For more information contact: Toni Nelson at 245-5980.

Northeast/Northwest Regions

The Honourable John Oldring, Minister of Family and Social Services, has announced the location of six new satellite shelters for battered women to be opened and funded in Northern Alberta. The satellites are to be located in Grande Cache, High Level, Fairview, Whitecourt, St. Paul and a site yet to be determined in the Lac La Biche/Athabasca area.

Northwest Region

PACE (Providing Assistance, Counselling and Education) in Grande Prairie recently hosted a three-day conference entitled "New Perspectives on Sexual Abuse." The conference addressed issues such as the impact of sexual abuse on sexuality, play therapy, stages in recovery of adult survivors, Bill C-15 and child abuse trial issues, working with adolescents and the non-offending parent. The Honourable John Oldring, Minister of Family and Social Services, was also present to deliver the keynote address and visit Grande Prairie's battered women's shelter, Odyssey House.

South Region

Worlds of Women Together: A Centre for Immigrant Women in Medicine Hat has been conducting a survey among immigrant women to find out their perception of family violence, the extent of the violence and the women's knowledge of available resources. The "Study on Family Violence among Medicine Hat Immigrant Families as perceived by Immigrant Women" will become available in October. Copies can be obtained by contacting Nahid Mazloum at 528-2090.



Video Reviews

"Through The Eyes of a Child"

This 30-minute video was produced by the Independent Order of Foresters. The film portrays a wide range of fictitious but realistic life situations in a counselling session setting, with adults recalling their experiences as abused children. The video emphasizes that the abused child is never at fault and discusses the seriously harmful effects of child abuse on the next generations and on society at large: "We parent as we have been parented" as the film points out. This film is easily understandable and a good vehicle for group discussion. The video is available from Florence Hallum, Prevention of Child Abuse Fund, 789 Don Mills Road, Toronto, Ontario, M3C 1T9, (416) 429-3000.

Calendar of Events

November 2 – 4 Calgary

“Children’s Rights, or Lack of: A Conference on Child Abuse, Abduction and Exploitation”

Contact: Child Find Canada Inc.
3150 – 5th Avenue N.W.
Calgary, Alberta T2M 4S3
(403) 270-3463
Fee: \$175.00

November 3 and 4 High River

A Woman’s Place: A Conference for Women with Insight for Men

Contact: Janis Belgum
Sunbow Society for the Prevention of
Family Violence
P.O. Box 3989
High River, Alberta T0L 1B0
(403) 652-2726

November 4 Grande Prairie

“You Hold the Key to Crime Prevention”

This workshop will include a session on family violence prevention as well as a panel discussion on “victim rights.”

Contact: R.J. (Jim) Laing, Constable
Crime Prevention/Victim Services Sec.
RCMP
Grande Prairie Detachment
Box 665
Grande Prairie, Alberta T8V 3A8
(403) 538-5700

November 6 – 8 Vancouver

The Adolescent Sex Offender: Prevention, Treatment and Management

Contact: Registration Office
Justice Institute of B.C.
4180 West 4th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C. V6R 4J5
(604) 228-9771, local 311
Fee: Before September 15 – \$155.00
After September 15 – \$175.00

November (various dates) Edmonton, Calgary, Fort McMurray
Protection of Innocence: Child Sexual Abuse, the Law and the Child Witness (This is a one-day workshop to be held in the above locations.)

Contact: Marsha Mildon
Faculty of Extension
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2J7
(403) 492-5732
Fee: \$25.00

November 23 – 24 Edmonton

Cross Cultural Aspects of Mental Health: Mental Fitness from a Multicultural Perspective

Contact: Cross Cultural Conference Registrar
c/o Roxanne McGinn
5th Floor, 108th Street Building
9942 – 108 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2J5
(403) 427-3469
Fee: \$65.00

FOCUS is a quarterly publication of the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence. Submissions for future issues, especially news about community activities, are welcome. To put your name on the mailing list or for additional copies, contact the office. Address all correspondence to:
The Office for the Prevention of Family Violence
Alberta Family and Social Services
10030 - 107 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 3E4 (403) 422-5916

**FAMILY
PREVENTION
VIOLENCE**

Alberta

FAMILY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

FOCUS

Newsletter for the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence

Volume 4, Number 3

Winter 1990

Prevention: everyone's responsibility

For centuries family violence had been thought of as a private matter, of concern only to those individuals within the families affected. But ever since child abuse became a public issue in the 1960s, more and more individuals, groups and governments have acknowledged that it and all other kinds of family violence are of grave concern to all of society. This concern has been generated, not only because of the increasing awareness of the misery and harm being done to the individuals involved, but also because of what it is costing our communities and society in general.

Consider what it costs to investigate and respond to all the cases of suspected child abuse reported to the authorities; to provide special help to children in school who are struggling with the effects of abuse in their families; to provide emergency shelter for battered women and their children; for the many treatment programs for those addicted to alcohol and drugs because they are trying to numb the pain of having been abused; for other counselling programs to deal with the effects of being abused; for our health care system to treat injuries at the time of the abuse and to provide psychiatric treatment for those who are struggling to come to terms with the effects. The cost to our justice system is incalculable. There is the cost to the police of responding to calls and the cost of the courts, probation, parole and correctional institutions for cases that go through the justice system. The perpetrators of abuse are not the only ones that go through this system. Countless numbers of youth and adult inmates of correctional facilities have histories of being victimized in their families; such

abuse, no doubt, contributing to their anti-social behavior.

Factors contributing to family violence

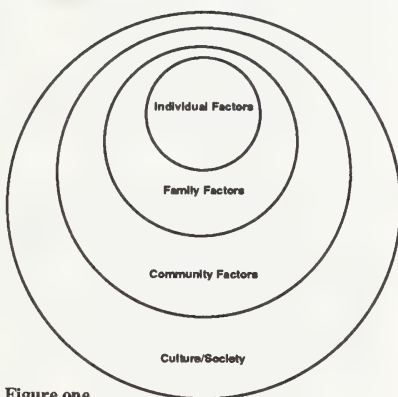


Figure one

These are just some of the costs that can be attributed to family violence. There are innumerable others that are not so easy to identify, such as lost creativity and productivity that could enrich the lives of all.

An increasing number of communities are acknowledging the need to address this costly problem in a meaningful way. Concern for the safety and other needs of those being abused require that appropriate services be available to them, but the problem itself will not diminish until efforts are directed at prevention.

Preventing family violence from happening requires an understanding of what is causing it. Initially, it was believed that single factors, such as mental illness, unemployment, poverty, stress or substance abuse caused people to be abusive. It is now known that the issue is much more complex than that. People do

not interact with each other in isolation. Their behavior is influenced by their past experiences, their present situation, their past and current families, the communities in which they live and the larger society. Each family violence situation has its own unique mix of factors which contributes to it in some way. (See Figure one.)

Some examples of individual factors which contribute to family violence are: low self esteem, feelings of threat to self, a belief that one is entitled to obedience and respect from the abused person, lack of ability to express feelings or resolve conflict in non-destructive ways and lack of resources to cope with stress. In cases of child abuse, lack of knowledge about children's needs and how to meet them are often contributing factors and ignorance of the aging process is sometimes a factor in cases of elder abuse.

Inflexible and inequitable power relationships and rigid assignments of responsibilities within families often contribute to family violence, as does the opposite family arrangement where no one is clearly responsible for anything. A lack of resources needed to cope with stressful situations and less than adequate living conditions also contribute to the

Continued on page 2

Inside

Did You Know?	3
Community News	4
Video Reviews	5
Calendar of Events	6

Prevention continued

abusive behavior of some individuals.

Community factors operate in several ways to contribute to this problem. Where there is an absence of needed services and relevant learning resources individuals and families are denied the support and information that could help prevent the abuse. Such a lack communicates that this assistance is unnecessary, thus putting additional stress on families and compounding their isolation.

Preventing family violence from happening requires an understanding of what is causing it.

Two kinds of factors contribute to family violence at the societal level. One is the uneven access to economic resources; the absence of which contributes to stress and an inability to meet the needs of family members. The other is the communication of certain values and beliefs through the mass media and other means. For example, the belief that violence is a legitimate way to express anger or respond to conflict reinforces those who are inclined to bully others to get their way.

All four levels, the individual, the family, the community and society in general must be taken into account in any plan that aims to prevent family violence. Those individuals that abuse other family members are not acting in isolation, nor are they merely puppets of the social system in which they live.

No act of violence is simply the pitting of one individual against another; each contains deep cultural and psychological meanings. At the same time, no act of violence is merely the expression of a social problem (or a culture) such as poverty or unemployment or male dominance; each is also the personal act of a unique individual. (Breines and Gordon)

Therefore, any concerted effort directed at the prevention of family violence will need to take account of and address contributing factors at all levels, if it is to be effective.

What can communities do to prevent family violence?

Many initiatives can be undertaken. Here are a few key strategies:

- Acknowledge the existence of the problem.
- Generate concern and make a commitment to address it.
- Plan strategies that will eliminate, reduce or offset the influence of factors at all four levels which contribute to family violence; strategies such as:
 - Providing relevant learning opportunities for individuals, family members, helpers and decision makers.
 - Providing counselling, support and crisis services.
 - Using a variety of means to change attitudes that reinforce abusive behavior.

What will happen if communities do nothing?

Doing nothing suggests tacit approval for the behavior. Without intervention, the abuse almost always increases in frequency and severity. Children live what they learn. Those who witness abuse or are abused themselves are likely to imitate the behavior with their own families unless they seek out some way of learning different ways of behaving. If communities do nothing about family violence, the problem will continue and will likely get worse.

While protection and other services are vitally important in relieving the suffering of those who are being abused, only preventive activities will bring about a long term solution.

Gerry Kilgannon

Note: See Community News for an outline of some of the preventive strategies being used in communities around the province.

A new OPFV publication coming in 1990

Stopping abuse before it starts:

Thoughts about prevention

Did You Know?

■ **The Kids Help Phone** (1-800-668-6868), a non-profit service which provides professional counselling, information and referral services to children across Canada has been operating since May 16, 1989. Over 70,000 calls were received during the first six months of operation from children experiencing a wide variety of problems, issues and concerns. The average callers were 11-14 years. Over 100 children between 4 and 6 years have been counselled. Nine percent (over 6,300) of the calls received were from abused children. Most of them had never before spoken of their victimization to anyone. A major information campaign to tell children about the service will be undertaken in the spring of 1990. For more information contact:
Kids Help Phone
P.O. Box 513, Ste. 100
2 Bloor St. W. Toronto, M4W 3E2

Abuse is not the answer.

Alberta
FAMILY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

■ **The Canadian Council on Children and Youth** has a new package of material available called **Put The Child First**. It has been designed to help organizations educate volunteers who work with children about how to recognize signs of the children having been sexually abused and to know how to respond if told about such victimization. The package contains: a Guidelines Manual for agency officials, a Handbook for volunteers and youth leaders, a Prevention Manual for use with adolescents, a Leadership Training manual, a 15 minute training video and other resource and support materials. Training sessions have been held in Lethbridge and Calgary as well as in other centres across the country. There may be a session in Edmonton during 1990. For more information contact:
Canadian Council on Children and Youth
2211 Riverside Drive, Suite 14
Ottawa K1H 7X5

■ **The National Youth in Care Network** has received funding from Health and Welfare Canada and the Laidlaw Foundation to study and report on the issue of family violence from a youth-in-care perspective. The study will look at how the child welfare system affects abusive family relationship dynamics both positively (in ending the cycle of abuse) and negatively (in perpetuating the cycle). If you know of individuals who might participate in the study contact:
Brian Raychaba
2211 Riverside Drive, Suite 401
Ottawa K1H 7X5
(613) 738-0915
(from Canadian Child Welfare Association Newsletter, Winter 89)

■ Last April, the **Manitoba Association of Registered Nurses** developed a statement of principles on family violence. The following is included in the statement: "the nursing profession has a professional and social responsibility to address the issue of family violence and to promote non-violent interaction in families." For more information contact:
Doreen Cirling, Chairperson
Family Violence Committee
Manitoba Association of
Registered Nurses
647 Broadway
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0X2
(204) 774-3477
(from Vis-a-vis Autumn 89)

■ After ten years of preparation, the Convention on the Rights of Children was passed by the the **United Nations General Assembly** on November 20. When it has been ratified by the governments of 21 member nations, it will have the same status in international law as the Convention on Human Rights. Because of the nature of Canada's constitution, all provinces will need to approve the Convention before Canada can formally ratify it.

■ The University of Alberta's Legal Resource Centre has been presenting one-day workshops about child sexual abuse, the law and the child witness, at various locations in the province. For more information about the availability of this workshop for your community, call Karen Klak at 1-800-232-1961 or 492-5732 in Edmonton.



Community News

Last August, the Honourable John Oldring, Minister of Family and Social Services, announced the launching of the Community-based Family Violence Prevention Project Fund. The fund is designed to encourage public education and demonstration projects to test the feasibility and effectiveness of innovative approaches to the prevention of family violence. The response from individuals and agencies across the province has been enthusiastic. Seventy-two proposals for education projects were received in the fall. Thirty-six of the proposals were selected for funding. Some of them are described below.

Northeast

Cold Lake First Nation Indian Reserve is holding a series of community workshops to increase awareness and understanding of family violence in the community. Dr. Margaret Savage Crisis Centre of **Grande Centre**, which recently moved to new quarters, is developing a series of education modules to use in their public education presentations. Nancy Mereska of **Two Hills** is developing two brochures: one for teens about potentially abusive relationships and one on the effects of child sexual abuse. **St. Paul and District Crisis Association** is producing a pamphlet for parents related to child abuse prevention.

Northwest

The **Swan Hills** Family and Community Support Services prepared a 12 page insert for a local newspaper on family violence prevention and available community resources. The **Fort Vermilion** Committee for the Prevention of Family Violence conducted a variety of awareness activities during Family Violence Prevention Month. In **Grande Prairie**, Cool Aid organized educational seminars on family violence for the young people it serves and the Grande Prairie Women's Residence Association is developing pamphlets on dating and family violence for children and teens. They are also working with the schools to prepare a play for presentation in the schools and on community television. A women's group on the Assumption Reserve near **High Level** is using its funds to increase their understanding of the dynamics of family violence and what might be done about it.

South

The **Blood Tribe** Board of Education is developing a handbook for native high school students in the Treaty 7 area of southern Alberta. The handbook is designed to help the young people recognize and prevent family violence.

Central

The **Drumheller** Interagency Committee on Family Violence and the **Stettler** Society for the Prevention of Family Violence organized a variety of awareness activities in their respective communities during Family Violence Prevention Month. The **East Central Communities Association** for Sexual Abuse Treatment and the Society for the Prevention of Family Violence of **Wetaskiwin and District** are using their funds for educational workshops for professionals and volunteers who work with families and individuals affected by family violence. Three **Red Deer** agencies and one in **Sundre** are developing educational materials. The Central Alberta Women's Emergency Shelter is developing two videos to be used in schools and children's support groups to teach and encourage non-abusive behavior. The Jim Freeman Group Psychotherapists are preparing a handbook for victims of wife abuse outlining what to expect from treatment programs for their abusive partners. Systemics Behavioral Services Ltd. is developing a workbook to be used with 7-12 year old boys who have been or are in abusive families. The workbook will focus on exploring attitudes and alternative ways of behaving. Help for Victims of Family Violence, **Sundre** is developing a training package to assist persons who work with youth to intervene early in the development of abusive behavior.



Video Reviews

Edmonton

Several communities conducted activities during Family Violence Prevention Month. The **Strathcona County** inter-agency Group, **Spruce Grove Family and Community Support Services**, **St. Albert SAIF Society** and the **Edmonton Family Violence Treatment, Education and Resource Centre** used drama, films, panel presentations, displays and workshops to promote a better understanding of family violence and what can be done to address the problem. The **Metis Association of Alberta** is preparing to publish a series of articles on family violence in a native newspaper. The **Association for Individual and Family Life Education** brought family life educators together for a seminar on family violence.

The **Victorian Order of Nurses in Edmonton** is preparing a manual for the use of nurses which will include guidelines for identification of 'at risk' families and appropriate nursing interventions. The **Edmonton Mennonite Centre for the Assistance of Newcomers** will distribute a package of material on wife abuse to Spanish speaking people. **Free Spirit Counselling, Edmonton**, is developing and using material to assist native parents with their child rearing. The **Sherwood Park** group that developed the drama *Under Broken Wings* will print and distribute the script for use by other groups.

Calgary

The **City of Calgary Social Services** conducted an awareness campaign in November. The **Bow Valley Family Violence Committee** held a series of workshops on family violence and is preparing articles on the topic to insert in local newspapers. **Airdrie Ministerial Association** is conducting workshops for community professionals. The following three agencies are developing materials and strategies for working with children and adolescents to help them recognize abusive behavior and learn how to interact positively. The **Junior League of Calgary** is training volunteers to work with adolescents. The **Pineridge Community Project Society** will use a variety of resources to work directly with teens in a particular neighborhood in **Calgary**. The **Bow Valley Women's Resource Centre** in **Canmore** is producing a video.

The **Sarcee Nation Education Department** is designing a program to help native children overcome the effects of living in abusive environments.

**Next deadline for
receiving applications
for funding education
projects: May 15, 1990**

Through the Eyes of a Child

This 30 minute VHS video was produced in England for the Independent Order of Foresters. After an introduction by actor **Michael Cain**, a group of adults is shown, meeting in a therapy group session where they talk about the abuse they suffered as children and how it has affected their lives. They describe all types of abuse: physical, sexual and emotional. One of the participants has abused his son and is shown struggling to make the connection between his own childhood experiences and his treatment of his son. This video very effectively portrays the long lasting effects of child abuse.

Available for purchase for \$35.00 from:
Independent Order of Foresters
789 Don Mills Road
Don Mills, Ontario M3C 1T9

The Crown Prince

This new 36 minute film and video, available for rent from the **National Film Board**, tells the story of a middle class family suffering the effects of wife abuse. In particular it focuses on the two sons and how they react to their father's violence. The younger one suffers considerable anxiety which affects his behavior at school and the older adolescent finds himself imitating his father's behavior, despite his dislike and disapproval of it.

Calendar of Events

February 22-23 Toronto, Ontario

Conference on Child Poverty

Contact: Institute for the Prevention of Child Abuse
25 Spadina Road
Toronto, Ontario M5R 2S9

March 1-2 Calgary, Alberta

Workshop on Crisis and Trauma Intervention

Contact: Calgary Police Services Crisis Branch
316 - 7 Avenue, S.E.
Calgary, Alberta T2G 0J2
(403) 268-8998

March 5 Edmonton, Alberta

Sexual Abuse of Children with Special Needs: Prevention and Treatment

Contact: Education Response Centre
6240 - 113 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T6H 3L2
(403) 422-0221 or Zenith 22126

April 3-6 Toronto, Ontario

Professional Level Training for Treatment of Adolescent Sex Offenders

Contact: Canadian Child Welfare Association
2211 Riverside Drive, Suite 401
Ottawa, Ontario K1H 7X5
(613) 738-0697

May 29 - June 1 Edmonton, Alberta

Pedophilia: Interdisciplinary Approach to Issues, Theory and Research

Contact: Medical InServices Inc.
654-21, 10405 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 3S2

June 24-27 Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Third Symposium on Violence and Aggression

Contact: Registration Office
Division of Extension and Community Relations
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 0W0
(306) 966-5539

September 2-6 Hamburg, Germany

8th International Congress on Child Abuse and Neglect

Contact: Hamburg Messe
Congress GMBH
P.O. Box 30 24 80 D-2000 Hamburg 36
Federal Republic of Germany
Phone: 040-35 69-2244

FOCUS is a quarterly publication of the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence. Submissions for future issues, especially news about community activities, are welcome. To put your name on the mailing list or for additional copies, contact the office. Address all correspondence to:

The Office for the Prevention of Family Violence
Alberta Family and Social Services
10030 - 107 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 3E4 (403) 422-5916

**FAMILY
PREVENTION
VIOLENCE**

Alberta

FAMILY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

FOCUS

Newsletter for the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence

Volume 5, Number 1

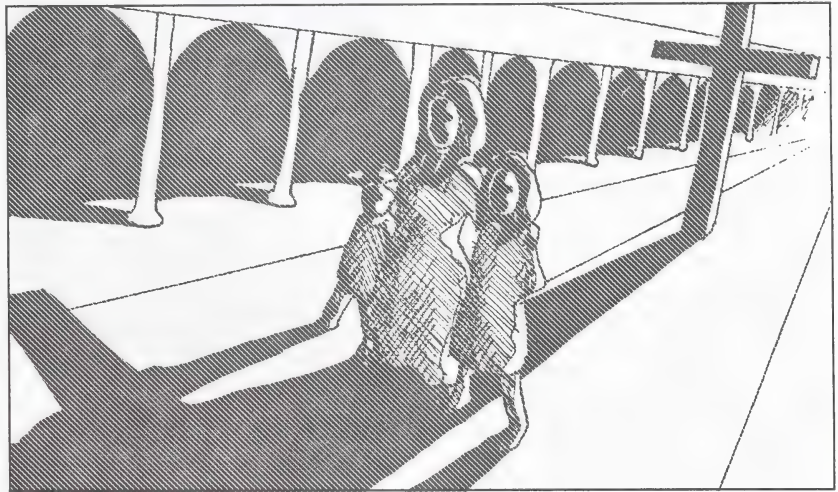
Spring 1990

Religious Beliefs: A Help or Hindrance to Prevention?

Every person who abuses another person is responsible for his or her own behavior. But whether or not any particular person chooses to be abusive is ultimately dependent on a whole host of factors. That person's life experiences and his or her current circumstances exert some influence, but the most powerful determinants of behavior are the beliefs, values and attitudes that are important to each individual. The sources of those beliefs, values and attitudes are usually difficult to trace. They come from personal experiences and from the families, communities and cultures that help to shape the person. Religious beliefs play an important part in everyone's thinking. They may have a direct influence on personal beliefs or their influence may be more subtle, helping to form general societal attitudes and values.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Association examined this principle at a public forum "The Role of Religion in Family Relationships and Family Violence" held at the University of Alberta, December 6, 1989. The following article was originally presented as part of that forum. The views expressed are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence.

The question of why family abuse occurs cannot be answered by a simplistic statement. Many factors contribute to its tragic presence. The Canadian Church Council on Justice and Corrections suggest that some of them are: addiction



to alcohol, frustration from chronic unemployment, stressful work situations, jealousy, or a deep sense of personal insecurity. "But," the Council adds, "underlying causes are rooted in the traditional views of women's and men's roles within family relationships. Even people who grow up in non-violent families pick up messages that men must dominate and control the women and children in their lives and that women and children must submit to it."

Thus, in exploring the roots of family violence, I find it impossible not to focus on the part of patriarchy, where for reasons of tradition, culture and/or religion, men are assumed to hold the prime authority within the family. It is impossible also for me to not connect patriarchy with the traditional Christian stance.

According to Gerda Lerner in *The Creations of Patriarchy*, patriarchy in its

wider definition means the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance in society in general. According to the National Interdisciplinary Task Force on Domestic Violence, many survivors of family violence identify the patriarchal social structure as an important cause of abuse in families.

The Anglican Task Force on Violence Against Women in 1986, stated, "We think the issue is one of power and that

Continued on page 2

Inside

Did You Know?	3
Community News	4
Book Reviews	5
Calendar of Events	6

Religious Beliefs continued

the less powerful in the home are in a vulnerable position, whether they be women, children or the elderly.”

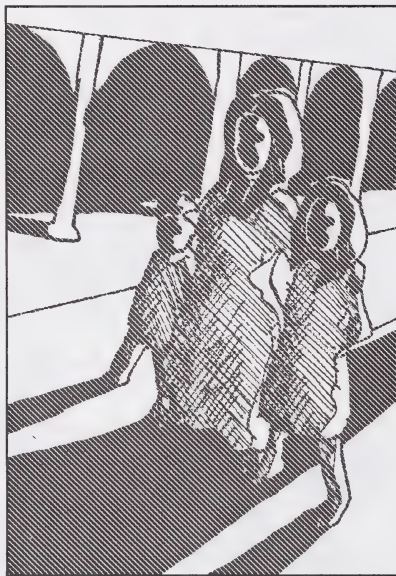
The Quebec Catholic Bishops released a report in December, 1989, stating that violence against women in the home is an “intolerable social problem to which the Catholic Church has contributed.”

I believe that Christianity as it is lived by many, demonstrates confusion between the literal interpretations of an experience that was time and culture limited, and the spirit of the teachings of Jesus Christ. The model that Christ gave us, one of caring and gentle love, is opposed to the “power model” that some Christian churches seem to support. In my view, there are those in many Christian sects whose specific interpretations of the Christian Bible have contributed and perpetuated the philosophy that supports unhealthy family relationships and even violence within the family. Let us reflect on two passages to demonstrate how the Bible has been used.

Letter of Paul to Eph. 5, 21:23, says, “Wives be subject to your husbands.”

One interpretation that is sometimes made is the destructive and traditional one that says that a wife must obey, be submissive, endure anything, even beatings and unreasonable demands. Those who interpret this passage in this way think that a husband can inflict whatever criticism, discipline and degradation that he wants, to keep his wife under his control.

In a different interpretation, it can be inferred that Paul’s real message was to tell husbands to treat wives as their own flesh, since he went on to write, “Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” This implies a mutuality and tender love, not envisioned in the first interpretation.



The second passage, again from Paul, Eph. 6-14, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord.”

One interpretation could mean harsh discipline which demands unthinking obedience; which forces children to yield to parents completely and equates the parent with God. I believe that in some cases of incest or damaging psychological abuse, children are led to believe that what their parents are doing is God’s will and they must submit.

Using a different interpretation, we can view Paul in his cultural context and see him providing a structural system with each role outlined and a moral training implied, but not necessarily a harsh one. We also have to resist isolating a specific section of a passage here, since a few lines further on Paul warns, “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger.” This part is often ignored.

Many of the same people who quote the above two passages to justify their beliefs ignore two of the more compassionate ones that could serve to promote more positive life-giving family relationships. When Christ spoke of marriage, he said in Matthew 19, “They are no longer two but one.” To me, this means there should be a love of equals, not a dominant/submissive relationship. In regard to children, Christ had children brought to Him that he might lay His hands on them — not in anger — but in love and blessing. He said “Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 19:14)

Thus, it seems to me that we have two visions in Christianity that are diametrically opposed to each other. One that is taught and lived by Jesus Christ and another represented by people like the minister in Ottawa who, in his sermons, stated that the Bible advocated spanking to drive out the rebellion in children. He admitted to beating his own eight month old son with an 18 inch stick. This kind of stance defends patriarchal practices. Unfortunately, a belief in patriarchy not only regulates the externals of human behavior but also devalues feeling, intuition and emotion. It not only robs women and children of their rightful place, it also harms men who are expected to repress a great part of their nature, are often left unable to cope with their emotions, and are given only models of inappropriate control. As well, this reluctance and inability to deal with the feeling level of life impedes the growth of open communication and positive family interactions.

There are complex issues in relationships for everyone. Those who accept the patriarchal model have a double difficulty.

Did You Know?

It allows perpetrators to believe that they have God-given authority to control their families. As well, victims who hold such beliefs may think that submission is the way to sanctity.

The concepts of guilt and forgiveness need much more exploration. The sad reality is that a "blame the victim" syndrome exists. When religion emphasizes sin, I believe it can contribute to the guilt feelings that many victims have. It is ironic that it is often the innocent more than the perpetrators who are made to feel guilty.

Forgiveness has also been twisted and usually means forget and do so immediately. Many women report having stayed in abusive situations because their pastors had told them God expects them to forgive. But psychologically, we know forgiveness is a long process of healing and usually requires professional help; that forgetting actually impedes forgiveness, rather than encourages it.

I believe that we must challenge the assumptions and the patriarchal structures that enable destructive and growth-reducing family relationships to exist. We must peel away the effects of writers who have advocated an adherence to patriarchal structures. We must change our understanding of the Bible and revise our language and images. We must heal those who have been hurt and destroyed by these structures; both victims and perpetrators. We must break what I see as the link between Christianity and patriarchy to enable individuals and families to be whole and alive and free from violence as God meant them to be.

Kay Feehan,
Program Chair, Social Work Program,
Grant MacEwan Community College,
Edmonton

■ In an effort to educate and sensitize Catholic priests in **Quebec** about wife abuse, the Quebec Bishop's Conference is circulating a paper entitled "Heritage of Violence." The paper, prepared by the Conference's Social Affairs Committee, accuses the Church of contributing to the perpetuation of wife abuse by its patriarchal bias which, among other things, tends to praise women for the very qualities which abusive husbands exploit: sensitivity, patience, compassion and understanding and by telling women that it is a sin to leave their abusive husbands.

■ B'Nai Brith Women of Canada opened a short term emergency shelter for Jewish women in **Toronto**, in 1988. The shelter, a two bedroom apartment, provides a kosher kitchen for those who require it. The facility is well used, demonstrating that wife abuse does occur in Jewish families, despite the belief that it does not, notes contact person Eileen Fields. For further information call her at (416) 630-9313.

■ The **Alberta Northwest** Conference of the United Church of Canada, at its regional gathering, May 26, examined the issue of child abuse and what kinds of responses and supports are available for children. The Church is currently in the midst of the Ecumenical Decade in Solidarity for Women. This initiative is helping to empower women against oppressive structures worldwide.

■ St. Agnes Catholic Parish in **Edmonton** chose to mark Family Day in February with an evening of information about family violence. A panel of experts in the area spoke to a good turnout of parishioners.

■ Two agencies in **Calgary** have developed manuals for persons who are interested in assisting abused women.

The Calgary Coalition on Family Violence has developed *Let's Work Together to Stop Family Violence*, by Sarah Bhola and Toni Nelson. It is available from the Coalition at 802 - 14 Avenue S.W. Calgary, T2R 0N6 for \$15 plus \$5 for postage.

This training manual focuses on the needs of immigrant women. The manual should be required reading for immigrant settlement staff, women's shelter staff and all other service providers who are involved in any way in assisting abused immigrant women. It contains background information on family violence and barriers to services experienced by immigrant women. It also contains information and workshop exercises on cross cultural sensitivity and counselling, acculturation and racism.

The Junior League of Calgary and the Battered Women's Support Centre, with funding from the Alberta Law Foundation, have developed a manual for volunteers offering court support to abused women. *Law and the Abused Woman* is a comprehensive overview of the legal system and its role in cases of wife assault. A brochure with essential legal information of interest to abused women has also been prepared. Copies of the brochure are available from the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence. For information about the manual, contact: The Junior League of Calgary, 511 - 22 Avenue N.W. Calgary T2S 0H5.



Community News

On February 21, the Honourable John Oldring, Minister of Family and Social Services announced the names of the successful recipients of funds for Family Violence Prevention Demonstration Projects. The fourteen projects selected will demonstrate a variety of innovative approaches to family violence prevention. All will be evaluated and a final report will be available after all the initiatives have been completed. Following are brief descriptions of the projects.

South

In **Lethbridge**, the Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect and Harbour House, a women's shelter operated by the YWCA, will jointly conduct groups for children of family violence and develop material that other facilitators can use to conduct similar group experiences for children.

Interact Theatre Association of **Medicine Hat** will develop and perform an inter-active social drama that will focus on wife abuse, its effects and how to cope with and prevent it.

Calgary

The Junior League of **Calgary** will be building on the work they began with their educational grant. Their trained volunteers will teach school children the skills they need in order to have violence-free relationships.

Wood's Home, also of **Calgary**, will produce a video which will examine violence in families through interviews with individuals who have taken steps to stop the violence in their lives.

Northeast

The **Bonnyville** and District Family and Community Support Services will develop social dramas that demonstrate the differences between healthy and unhealthy relationships. The dramas will be performed by local high school students in parks and campgrounds in the Bonnyville area.

The Crisis Association of **Vegreville** will operate a crisis line in conjunction with the Dr. Margaret Savage Crisis Centre in Grande Centre. This project will try to determine the effectiveness in terms of usage, quality of service and cost of the model being piloted as compared with other models of rural crisis lines.

Northwest

Providing Assistance, Counselling and Education for People in Distress (PACE) of **Grande Prairie**, an agency that provides assistance, counselling and education for people in distress, will develop training material, give workshops and organize a conference about child sexual abuse prevention in the region. **Wabasca, Sturgeon Lake, Horse Lake, Fox Creek, Fairview and Valleyview** are some of the communities that will be receiving the training.

Central

Jim Freeman Group Psychotherapists Ltd. of **Red Deer** will conduct a program designed to help reconstitute families in which the husband/father has completed a minimum of four months in a batterers' group treatment program. The aim of the program is to prevent abuse from recurring.

The Society for the Prevention of Family Violence of **Wetaskiwin** and District will conduct group programs for mothers who have histories of abuse as children and/or adults and for their children. The women's program will provide opportunities to resolve issues that are causing difficulties with child rearing. The children's program will focus on helping the children develop non-abusive conflict resolution strategies and other social skills.

The Central Alberta Women's Outreach Society in **Red Deer** will develop a program to provide assistance to women who are trying to make changes in their relationships and lifestyles after leaving abusive relationships.



Book Reviews

Edmonton

The Azimuth Theatre Association of **Edmonton** will research, develop and perform a drama which addresses the social, biological and psychological factors which contribute to violence in the home. The drama will focus on the behavior and motivation of abusers.

The **Grande Cache** Transition House Society will provide free teaching/homemaker services to families and individuals in the town and surrounding Metis settlements who are at risk of neglecting or abusing their children.

The Yellowhead Emergency Shelter for Women in **Hinton** will establish Family Resources Centres in at least four of the communities which it serves. New centres will be opened in **Hinton**, **Wildwood** and **Jasper** and information about family violence will be provided to the already established family resource centre in **Edson**.

The Yellowhead Tribal Services Agency will organize cultural healing circles on each of the member reserves of the Yellowhead Tribal Council: **Enoch**, **Alexis**, **Alexander**, **Sunchild** and **O'Chiese Reserves**.

Fortune, Marie M. (1987) *Keeping the Faith: Questions and Answers for the Abused Woman*. Harper & Row. San Francisco. 94 pgs.

This little book, written for abused women and useful for clergy persons, was written by a Christian pastor who has counselled many abused women. It is a compilation of questions she has encountered in her work, along with answers that the author hopes will "enable Christian abused women to keep the faith — with themselves and with their God."

Pellauer, Mary D., Chester, Barbara, Boyajian, Jane. (1987) *Sexual Assault and Abuse: A Handbook for Clergy and Religious Professionals*. Harper & Row. San Francisco. 278 pgs.

This book grew from a series of workshops for clergy on sexual violence. The editors hope it will be used in similar workshops, for seminary classroom teaching and by anyone in religious communities seeking guidance for dealing with victims, both adults and children. The book is organized into three parts. Part 1 consists of several essays which provide knowledge about the issue. Part 2 is made up of discussions about theological and religious issues as they relate to this problem. Part 3 focuses on how the clergy can respond with compassion when confronted with victims. Included is an essay on what the church as an institution in society can do to address the issue.

Family Violence in a Patriarchal Culture: A Challenge to our Way of Living (1988), a joint project of the Church Council on Justice and Corrections and the Canadian Council on Social Development. P.O. Box 3505, Stn. C, Ottawa K1Y 4G1

This publication has been put together in the form of a kit which includes slides, an audio cassette and a resource book that presents varied and sometimes conflicting points of view. A collage of stories along with commentary is used to help the reader explore and reflect on his or her personal experience and relate it to the larger cultural context in which family violence occurs. The kit is designed as a tool for individual or group study.

Golding, Gail (1988) *Hands to End Violence Against Women: A Resource for Theological Education*. Women's Inter-church Council of Canada. 77 Charles St. W., Toronto, Ontario M5S 1K8

This resource book contains information about wife abuse and presents a comprehensive analysis and reflection on violence against women in the context of Christian theology and practice. It was designed to encourage those intending to enter the ministry of a Christian Church to deal with violence against women in ways that are both "pastoral and prophetic." Suggestions are given about ways to use the material. Included are workshop outlines, suggested exercises and descriptions of other resources that can be used to enhance learning.



Calendar of Events

September 2 – 6 Hamburg, Germany

8th International Congress on Child Abuse and Neglect

Contact: Hamburg Messe
Congress GMBH
P.O. Box 30 24 80 D-2000 Hamburg 36
Federal Republic of Germany
Phone: 040-35 69-2244

September 24 – 27 Mississauga, Ontario

Canadian Organization for Victim Services (COVA) Conference

Contact: Victim Services of Peel
7750 Hurontario Street
Brampton, Ontario L6V 3W6

October 10 – 12 Montreal, Quebec

A Colloquium on Violence and the Elderly

Contact: Community Relations
Surete du Quebec, Montreal District
1701 Parthenas Rd.
Montreal, Quebec H2L 4K7
(514) 598-4083

October 22 – 24 Toronto, Ontario

Focus on Child Abuse: Stop the Hurt (5th National Conference)

Contact: Consultation and Conference Services
Institute for the Prevention of Child Abuse
25 Spadina Rd.
Toronto, Ontario M5R 2S9
(416) 921-4997

January 23 – 25, 1991 Toronto, Ontario

Elder Abuse and Crime

Contact: Rosser, Munro and Associates Conference
Consultants
4 Ferbane Place
Willowdale, Ontario M2J 1X8
(416) 493-8062

Special News

Calgary's Mayor Al Duerr has set up a Task Force on Community and Family Violence to examine the issues of family violence, including child and elder abuse, as well as street and gang violence, school violence and violence in ethnic minorities. Represented on the Task Force are the Calgary Police Service, Calgary Board of Education, Calgary City Council and Social Services Department, Alberta Family and Social Services, Alberta Mental Health, University of Calgary, Faculties of Social Welfare and Law and the business community. The Task Force will review research studies, define issues surrounding and contributing to violence, identify local resources and gaps in services.

Public hearings will be held in October and a position paper will be released in February, 1991. The paper will define areas of priority for addressing the problems of both private and public violence for the next decade.

FOCUS is a quarterly publication of the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence. Submissions for future issues, especially news about community activities, are welcome. To put your name on the mailing list or for additional copies, contact the office. Address all correspondence to:

The Office for the Prevention of Family Violence
Alberta Family and Social Services
10030 - 107 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 3E4 (403) 422-5916



FAMILY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

FOCUS

Newsletter for the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence

Volume 5, Number 2

Summer 1990

Abused Women: getting better police protection?

What responsibility the police should take in the overall public response to wife abuse has been a matter of considerable debate, for some time now. In Canada, the debate began in earnest in the 1970s, when advocates for battered women began demanding that police provide women with the same protection from assault in their homes as they believed was being provided to people in general on the street. Many research reports, in both Canada and the United States, had indicated at that time that there was an almost universal police practice of either ignoring or trivializing the seriousness of wife battering. It was in response to this situation that advocates, mostly grass roots women's groups, were reacting.

The debate is still continuing, but there are signs that the role of the police as it relates to this issue is changing. To

understand this change requires an examination of many factors. The police do not operate in isolation. They, like all institutions are profoundly influenced by the prevailing values and attitudes of the society in which they operate.

The following factors were among those that were influencing police practices in the early 70s. Most people still viewed the family as a private domain that was responsible for its own internal discipline and which kept its problems to itself. The belief that women were "chattels" belonging to their husbands was still prevalent among many people. The Criminal Code, written for the purpose of describing actions that threatened the peace and order of society was not considered an appropriate tool for use in settling private family matters. The police looked on the "domestic disputes" to which they were called, as lovers' spats that had got

out of hand. It was generally believed by most people that women were free to leave any situation at any time and if they continued to subject themselves to abuse, it could only be because they liked it.

In mounting their campaign to gain more police protection for battered women, the advocates argued that no person has the right to assault any other person, no matter what relationship they have to each other; that the use of violence in intimate relationships is a form of oppression, not merely the outcome of a lovers' spat. They also pointed out that women stayed in their situations for a whole host of reasons, both personal and societal, none of which had anything to do with enjoying being hurt. The advocates also worked to dispel the myth that wife assault was an insignificant and unusual problem in society. They demonstrated through research that the problem was widespread and its effects far reaching.

One consequence of the increasing awareness stimulated by these efforts was a report prepared by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Issues. The report, released in 1982 acknowledged in an official way what the women had been saying all along.

Continued on page 2

Inside

Did You Know?	3
Community News	4
Book Reviews	5
Calendar of Events	6



Police Response continued

"A woman who has been beaten cannot count on the police to help her. A study carried out in 1975 and 1976 reveals that the Vancouver police force responded to approximately 53% of the calls they received which were related to male-female disputes. Our evidence suggests that the problem is similar in most other Canadian cities; while police will almost always respond to break-and-enter calls, there is no assurance that they will respond to domestic calls. Until very recently police training and police practice with respect to the handling of domestic cases has not been directed at helping the victim They are ordinarily instructed not to arrest the batterer unless they find him actually hitting his victim (an unusual situation), or unless the injuries are severe enough to require a certain number of stitches. They have no authority to take the batterer away and leave the wife (and children) in her own home. In short given the usual training and under usual practice the police are at best able to calm the batterer and leave the situation at that" (p. 9).

This report and others published around the same time fueled the concern about the whole criminal justice system response to wife battering that was growing across this country and in the United States. Two studies that were later to prove very influential examined the effects of arresting perpetrators in wife assault cases. In both London, Ontario and Minneapolis, Minnesota, where the studies were conducted, results indicated that arrest did reduce the number of repeat calls to police. Other studies tried to uncover just which factors were blocking the use of arrest as a response to wife assault. Their results pointed to values and attitudes of individual police officers, lack of training, the policies of police departments, the limitations of practice imposed

by legislation, particularly the Criminal Code and the Canada Evidence Act. There was also the perceived difficulty of collecting evidence for charges if the victims refused or were afraid to testify and the apparent lack of will in the rest of the criminal justice system to prosecute assault charges.

Meanwhile a number of forces had been gathering momentum in North American society. The privacy and traditional structure of the family was crumbling. More groups of people, growing numbers of women, blacks, aboriginal peoples, students and children to name a few, were demanding to share in the power structure and the opportuni-

"Privacy and traditional structure of the family was crumbling"

ties available in society. Victims of all sorts of crime and their advocates were objecting to the way the criminal justice system was ignoring their needs and sometimes revictimizing them.

In the early 80s, a small number of police forces started to make some changes. Most notable was the London, Ontario Police Department, which issued a directive to all its officers, that instructed them "to lay common assault charges in cases of wife assault when they had reasonable and probable grounds to believe that the offence had occurred." In other words, London police officers were to take the matter of wife assault seriously and treat it like they would any other assault. Acknowledging

that police practises were only one part of the total response in their community other parts of the system were improved as well. A co-ordinating committee on family violence, which included the police, was set up to stimulate and oversee the changes.

By the end of 1983, changes had been made to some of the federal legislation and policies which had been impeding the laying of charges in wife assault cases. As well, the Federal Ministry of the Solicitor General with the support of provincial governments was encouraging police departments across the country to adopt the same charging policy as the London Police Department had.

In Alberta, the RCMP was responsible for initiating a study of community responses to family violence in rural northern Alberta. The Mayerthorpe, Whitecourt and Athabasca detachments, involved in the study itself were diligent about submitting their data and cooperating with the researchers.

The Edmonton Police Service has recently revamped the way it is responding to reports of wife assault. In late 1989 Constable Jack Tetz, with the enthusiastic support of Staff Sgt. Bruce Billings, the man in charge of criminal investigations at the city's Londonderry Division, conducted a study of the police services' responses, to what were then called "family disputes." The report of the study included several recommendations for changes in practise. Underlying the recommendations was the acknowledgment that wife assault is a serious problem in Edmonton and that the police service needed to make some fundamental changes in the way it thinks about and responds to this problem. Since the report was submitted, several of the recommendations have been implemented. Guide-

Book Reviews

lines, giving all police officers clear directions about how to respond to cases that have been developed and adopted. Included in those guidelines are instructions for foot patrol officers to make callbacks to families when appropriate. All cases are reviewed weekly by the officer in charge of criminal investigations at each of the service's four divisions and also are reviewed and discussed by the superintendents in charge of those divisions. These practises and others that have been implemented demonstrate the high priority the Edmonton Police Service is now giving to this problem.

"Edmonton Police Service now giving high priority to this problem"

Earlier this month, Solicitor General Richard Fowler announced several new activities that his department will be undertaking to help improve police services for battered women in Alberta (see page 6). Prior to developing the department's plan, staff consulted with police departments and detachments across the province. They found widespread support for the planned strategies.

These activities seem to indicate that more and more police forces in Alberta are taking on the responsibility that battered women's advocates have been campaigning for; the responsibility of providing the same protection for women in their homes as is provided for persons on the street.

Gerry Kilgannon

Edmonton

The Strathcona County Family Violence Awareness Committee is organizing a family violence awareness conference for women. (See Calendar of Events.)

The Yellowhead Emergency Shelter for Women Society of Hinton will use their grant to purchase material to stock Family Resource Centres they have set up in Hinton and three other communities.

Our Place Family Centre in Okotoks will conduct a series of workshops for women at risk of abusing their children.

Changing Together, a centre which offers assistance to immigrant women in Edmonton, will offer a three-part workshop and brochure on family violence for women from middle eastern countries.

The City of Edmonton Community and Family Services will research and develop material on dating violence for use with adolescents.

Drayton Valley and District Shelter Society will conduct a family violence awareness campaign in their community.

Family Service Association of Edmonton will offer an educational program to children who have lived or are living in abusive families.

The City of Edmonton Employee Assistance Service will prepare material on family violence for their staff and clients.

The Indo Canadian Women's Association of Edmonton will prepare a special edition on family violence of their Hindi language newsletter.

The Young Women's Christian Association of Edmonton will establish a collection of resource material on family violence suitable for the clients using their service.

Police Intervention in Wife Abuse:
A report based on data from women resident in Alberta shelters. Prepared by the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence.

This 45 page report begins by describing the history and methods of police intervention in wife assault cases in North America during the last thirty years. It notes that there has been a dramatic improvement in the response since the early 1980s when police were instructed to lay charges of common assault when they had "reasonable and probable grounds to believe that the offence had occurred."

Women using Alberta shelters were asked several questions concerning the involvement of police in their situations. The report goes on to document the answers of 5,991 women to those questions between November 1, 1985 to April 30, 1988 and discusses the implications of their replies. Police in Alberta received a mixed review from the women who used the shelters during that time period. Several recommendations conclude the report.

Copies of the report are available free of charge, from the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence.



Community News

On August 31, the Honourable John Oldring, Minister of Family and Social Services, announced the names of the organizations selected to receive grants for family violence prevention educational projects during this fiscal year. The projects are briefly described below.

South

The Canadian Mental Health Association in **Pincher Creek** will implement a comprehensive Family Violence Project, consisting of workshops, brochures and radio spots, designed to increase awareness and understanding of the issue in their community.

The Taber Child Abuse Committee will bring the InterAct Theatre group from Medicine Hat to **Taber** to present their inter-active socio-drama on family violence to school students and the public.

Lethbridge Family Services is organizing an educational workshop on family violence for clergy in their community.

The Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect in **Lethbridge** will develop a creative visual display of information about child abuse for use at community events.

Lethbridge and District Inter-Agency Prevention of Family Violence Committee will stage a number of events during Family Violence Prevention Month.

Calgary

The Bow Valley Committee on Family Violence representing **Canmore, Banff** and other communities along the Bow Valley, will organize a training program for volunteers helping families in crisis.

The Bow Valley Women's Resource Centre in **Canmore** will prepare a training package to accompany the video on dating violence developed with a previous family violence prevention educational grant.

The Sarcee Community Outreach Program in **Calgary** will develop and implement a program using native elders to prevent family violence.

Central

The **Red Deer** Public Library will establish a special collection of resources focusing on family violence.

The O'Chiese Indian Band, located near **Rocky Mountain House**, will offer three workshops in their community on abuse of elderly people.

The Eastpark Educational Opportunities Council of **Provost** will use their grant for two projects. One is a series of educational sessions for mothers who were abused at some time in their lives. The other project will bring the Azimuth Theatre family violence drama to the community in November.

Systemics Behavioral Services of **Red Deer** will develop a User's Manual to accompany a workbook which they designed to help young boys living in abusive homes develop healthy attitudes and social skills. The workbook was prepared with a previous educational grant.

Edmonton

The **Strathcona County** Family Violence Awareness Committee is organizing a family violence awareness conference for teens. (See Calendar of Events.)

The Yellowhead Emergency Shelter for Women Society of **Hinton** will use their grant to purchase material to stock the Family Resource Centres they have set up in Hinton and three other communities.

Our Place Family Centre in **Morinville** will conduct a series of workshops for women at risk of abusing their children.

Changing Together, a centre which offers assistance to immigrant women in **Edmonton**, will offer a three-part workshop and brochure on family violence for women from middle eastern countries.

The City of **Edmonton** Community and Family Services will research and develop material on dating violence for use with adolescents.

Drayton Valley and District Shelter Society will conduct a family violence awareness campaign in their community.

Family Service Association of **Edmonton** will offer an educational program to children who have lived or are living in abusive families.

The City of **Edmonton** Employee Assistance Service will prepare material on family violence for their staff and clients.

The Indo Canadian Women's Association of **Edmonton** will prepare a special edition on family violence of their Hindi language newsletter.

The Young Women's Christian Association of **Edmonton** will establish a collection of resource material on family violence suitable for the clients using the housing service.

Book Reviews

The **Edmonton Family Violence Treatment, Education and Research Centre** will host a seminar on how to work effectively with men who abuse their wives. (See Calendar of Events.)

Azimuth Theatre Association of Sherwood Park, with partial funding for a demonstration project from the Community Project Fund, will perform *Maelstrom*, a drama about men who abuse their wives, several times in November as follows: in St. Paul on the 1st and 2nd, Provost on the 16th, Edmonton, at the Chinook Theatre on the 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th, and St. Albert on the 17th.

Northwest

The **Barrhead Association for Community Living** will hold a workshop on sexual abuse and the mentally handicapped for caregivers, family members, professionals and the general public.

Peace River and District Further Education Council will prepare and perform a drama on family violence in their community. The **Grimshaw/Berwyn and Manning and District Further Education Councils** will sponsor performances of the Peace River drama in their communities.

The **Grande Prairie Women's Residence Association** brought well-known researcher and writer Linda MacLeod to **Grande Prairie** to speak at a conference that was organized by several community agencies early in October.

Northeast

Ashmont Community School will offer several events focusing on family violence awareness to students and their parents and others in the community.

Lloydminster Interval Home organized a workshop for professionals who work with children exposed to wife battering.

Fishing Lake Metis Settlement FCSS Association will organize and present monthly workshops on family violence as well as develop and distribute written information.

Fort McMurray Family Violence Prevention Month Committee will arrange for a variety of awareness activities during Family Violence Prevention Month in November.

The **County of St. Paul** will present a workshop on child abuse for professionals and other interested persons in their community.

Mannville-Minburn-Innisfree Family and Community Support Services will arrange a workshop on elder and wife abuse for the communities it serves.

The **Athabasca Prevention of Family Violence Society** will assist teens to develop and perform dramatic vignettes on family violence.

Police Intervention in Wife Abuse: A report based on data from women resident in Alberta shelters. Prepared by the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence.

This 45 page report begins by describing the history and methods of police intervention in wife assault cases in North America during the last thirty years. It notes that there has been a dramatic improvement in the response since the early 1980s when police were instructed to lay charges of common assault when they had "reasonable and probable grounds to believe that the offence had occurred."

Women using Alberta shelters were asked several questions concerning the involvement of police in their situations. The report goes on to document the answers of 5,991 women to those questions between November 1, 1985 to April 30, 1988 and discusses the implications of their replies. Police in Alberta received a mixed review from the women who used the shelters during that time period. Several recommendations conclude the report.

Copies of the report are available free of charge, from the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence.

Calendar of Events

October 22-24 Toronto

Focus on Child Abuse: Stop the Hurt

Contact: Consultation and Conference Services
Institute for the Prevention of Child Abuse
25 Spadina Rd., Toronto, Ontario M5R 2S9
(416) 921-3151

October 26-27 Edmonton

Wife Assault: Toward Coordinating a Community Response

Contact: Edmonton Family Violence Treatment, Education and
Research Centre
201, 104th St. S.E., Edmonton, Alberta T6E 1X5
(403) 429-4635

November 22-23 Calgary

Challenges for the 90s: Prevention of Family Violence
Symposium

Contact: Susan Gardiner
75 - 6 Street N.E., Calgary, Alberta T2E 8H7
(403) 232-8717

November 23-24 Sherwood Park, Alberta

Explorations: A Youth Conference on Family Violence

Contact: Margaret Robinson
Strathcona Family and Community Services,
205 Athabasca Ave., Sherwood Park, Alberta
(403) 464-4044

January 23-25, 1991 Toronto

Elder Abuse and Crime

Contact: Rosser, Munro and Associates, Conference
Consultants
4 Ferbane Place, Willowdale, Ontario M2J 1X8
(416) 493-8062

May 9-12 Banff

Women and Mental Health: Women in a Violent Society

Contact: Marilyn Heart
Canadian Mental Health Association, North Central
Region
9th Floor, 10050 - 112 St., Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2J1
(403) 482-6091

Alberta Government Responds to Wife Abuse

On October 16, the Honourable Richard Fowler, Alberta Solicitor General, in conjunction with Chiefs of Police and Chairpersons of Police Commissions, announced new policing initiatives in five different categories. They include improved law enforcement and police education about wife assault, more support for women who are assaulted, a campaign to increase public awareness about the seriousness of the issue and research into the effectiveness of the initiatives proposed. Alberta's Women's Secretariat and the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence will be working with the Solicitor General's Department in implementing the new initiatives.

FOCUS is a quarterly publication of the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence. Submissions for future issues, especially news about community activities, are welcome. To put your name on the mailing list or for additional copies, contact the office. Address all correspondence to:
The Office for the Prevention of Family Violence
Alberta Family and Social Services
10030 - 107 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 3E4 (403) 422-5916

**FAMILY
PREVENTION
VIOLENCE**

Alberta

FAMILY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

VOLUME 5, NUMBER 3 WINTER 1990

F O C U S

NEWSLETTER FOR THE OFFICE FOR THE PREVENTION OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

Child sexual abuse: what have we learned?

The reality of child sexual abuse became very apparent to the North American and British people during the late 1970s. Several books on child sexual abuse began to appear in bookstores. Among the first of these were *Scream Quietly or the Neighbours Will Hear* by Erin Pizzey; *Against Our Will, Men, Women and Rape* by Susan Brownmiller; *Conspiracy of Silence: The Trauma of Incest* by Sandra Butler and *Kiss Daddy Goodnight* by Louise Armstrong. These books heralded what has since become an immense collection of literature, television shows, plays and movies about child sexual abuse.

The Canadian government reacted to this growing awareness in 1981 by establishing the Committee on Sexual Offences Against Children. Under the chairmanship of Dr. Robin Badgley, the committee carried out several research surveys and conducted hearings across the country. Its final report, released in 1984, presented unequivocal evidence that child sexual abuse is a serious problem in this country.

This report and other research studies have helped to dispel many myths about child sexual abuse such as:

Myth 1: Children are rarely sexually abused.

Historical records show that children have been sexually exploited within their families for centuries. Some modern psychologists, however, such as Sigmund Freud, have tried to deny this fact. Freud said that many of his female patients who claimed to be sexually abused were suffering from hysteria. Initially, he believed their accounts of being abused by their fathers and acknowledged this in a paper he presented in Vienna in 1896.

Later, however, he refuted this original belief and made a statement that was to become the foundation for the psychoanalytical approach to this problem for decades to come. He said:

Almost all my women patients told me they had been seduced by their father. I was driven to recognize in the end that these reports were untrue and so come to understand that hysterical symptoms are derived from phantasies and not from real occurrences. It was only later that I was able to recognize in this phantasy ...the expression of the typical Oedipus complex in women.¹

It is impossible to measure the harm this reinterpretation has done, and may still be doing, to countless victims.

Fortunately, today it is generally believed by experts that children rarely lie about being sexually abused. Children cannot describe in detail something they have never experienced. As one starts to believe the accounts of children and adults, one begins to see the magnitude of the problem. Many cases of child sexual abuse are surfacing as people relate their accounts either voluntarily, through surveys or through hearings such as those conducted by the Canadian Committee. One Canadian researcher concludes that at least 30 percent of the female child and youth population (and about half that proportion in males) will be current or former victims of child sexual abuse.²

Myth 2: Child sexual abuse only occurs in poor, illiterate and disadvantaged families.

This myth developed because most sexual abuse that came to the attention of authorities was occurring in families that were receiving public assistance. Families with sufficient resources of their own could more easily keep the abuse hidden. Random surveys conducted during the last decade show that abuse occurs in all socioeconomic, ethnic and geographic groups.

Myth 3: Children are not harmed by being sexually abused.

This belief comes from two incorrect assumptions. The first is that children outgrow the effects of any negative experiences. Some also believe that showing affection in a sexual way to children is helpful to them. Both of these propositions have been repeatedly disproved as adults come forward to reveal and work through the devastating and long lasting effects of their childhood victimization. Although many victims seem not to remember their victimization, many repress the conscious memories of their experiences by burying them, depersonalizing them or by escaping into other personalities. Rather than outgrowing the effects of sexual abuse, victims often develop desperate mechanisms as ways to survive.

Myth 4: Sexually abused children are at least partially, if not totally, to blame for what has happened to them.

Such a fallacy suggests adults are not responsible for their actions. It suggests that behaviour is merely the automatic reaction to some stimuli they cannot resist.

This assumption totally ignores the role of free will in human behaviour and likens humans to previously programmed machines.

Workers at a community-based incest centre in Australia offer an alternative view of responsibility in the sexual abuse of children. They call it the Power Theory.

The Power Theory, as developed to date, provides a broad-based framework that encompasses socio-political factors, familial factors and individual characteristics ... The theory utilizes two concepts of power: (1) structural power — power over others; and (2) personal power — power within self.

Structural Power: This is the power granted to individuals or classes of individuals by society. It is power accorded to one class of persons over another, on the basis of gender, age, race, religion, intelligence, education, etc ... Where there is power over others, there exists the *potential* to misuse or abuse the power ... Child (sexual) abuse represents a misuse of power that society legitimately accords to males and adults ... The potential for misuse of structural power by offenders in families becomes more of a reality in the light of misuse of personal power.

Personal Power: This is the power within the self. It is the inner strength that arises from a strong motivation to survive ... In some individuals personal power is positive, strong and healthy; in others it is underdeveloped, distorted or neglected. As such, it may be harmful to themselves and others ... Some individuals who have strong personal power operate from a base rooted in fears and anger, rather than self-worth and the worth of others. Operating from this damaged but powerful stance, they are in a position to hurt themselves and others. The distorted development of personal power may place them at risk of being persecutors, especially in the social

environment which bestows structural power on those individuals, e.g. the male adults in families.³

Myth 5: Child sexual abuse can be eliminated by one-dimensional approaches, such as simply teaching children to protect themselves.

Rix Rogers, Special Advisor on Child Sexual Abuse to the Minister of Health and Welfare, stresses the importance of viewing child sexual abuse as a product of several complex factors:

A long-term and effective response to the sexual abuse of children demands that we address deeply rooted contributing factors in our society. We must challenge the patriarchal values that allow the more powerful to exploit the less powerful. Too many families are isolated from community supports. Too many male and female children are socialized to continue the same destructive and violent behaviours used by their parents.⁴

These contributing factors, as well as some others, have been identified and are being addressed. Yet there is much we do not know. Children continue to be abused. We still have a long way to go.

Written by Gerry Kilgannon

¹Masson, J.M. (1985) *The Assault on Truth: Freud's Suppression of the Seduction Theory*. New York. Penguin Books

²Bagley, Christopher and King, Kathleen. (1990) *Child Sexual Abuse: The Search for Healing*. New York. Tavistock/Routledge.

³Driver, Emily and Droisen, Audrey (1989) *Child Sexual Abuse*. New York. New York University Press.

⁴Rogers, Rix (1990) *Reaching for Solutions: The Report of the Special Adviser to the Minister of Health and Welfare on Child Sexual Abuse in Canada*. Ottawa.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Earlier this year, the *Supreme Court of Canada* upheld a Manitoba jury's acquittal of Angelique Lyn Lavallee, who had been accused of murdering her common-law husband in 1986. Both the jury and the Supreme Court agreed that the shooting had been an act of self-defense which is a manifestation of the battered wife syndrome. Madame Justice Bertha Wilson asserted that such cases require expert witnesses to explain why battered women stay in relationships, why they feel trapped and helpless, and why, in the end, some of them strike back.
- During the spring of 1990, the *Calgary Branch of the Canadian Red Cross Society of Canada* successfully piloted the Child Abuse Prevention Program (CAPP) to junior high school students within the Calgary Public School Board. With the generous funding of the National Christie Foundation, they are looking forward to continuing these presentations, as well as expanding to other schools and community groups. For more information, contact Pamela Greer, 737 - 13 Avenue S.W., Calgary T2R 1J1. Phone 228-2169.
- In October, 1989, Linda MacLeod spoke to the *European and North American Conference on Urban Safety and Crime Prevention* about crimes against women and the fears women have about such crimes. Included in the talk were recommendations for actions that municipalities could take to address these problems. For more information about this speech, please call the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence.

The federal government has assigned the responsibility for establishing a *Children's Bureau* to the Minister of Health and Welfare, Perrin Beatty. The Bureau will be responsible for ensuring coordination and consistency in addressing children's issues. The establishment of such a bureau was recommended by Rix Rogers in his report on child sexual abuse, "Reaching for Solutions." For more information, contact: Susan Capling, Health and Welfare Canada, 21st Floor Jeanne Mance Building, Tunney's Pasture, Ottawa K1A 0K9. Phone (613) 957-0200.

Dr. Peter Jaffe, Director of the London (Ontario) Family Court Clinic and founding member of the London Coordinating Committee on Family Violence, visited Alberta twice recently. In October, Dr. Jaffe and his associate Elaine Hastings spoke to close to 100 people at a seminar in *Lloydminster* about assessment and intervention strategies for children exposed to wife battering. Participants represented a wide range of professionals as well as lay persons. A community child abuse committee to coordinate services was established as a result of the seminar.

In November, Dr. Jaffe was in *Calgary*, where he spoke to about 200 persons about the importance of community collaboration in addressing the problem of family violence. The seminar was sponsored by a collective of agencies in the city who are practising and promoting community collaboration. The group is planning another seminar for 1991.

Deborah-Kim Hurford of Sherwood Park travelled to Montreal recently to receive the 1990 Solicitor General Crime Prevention Award for the drama "*Under Broken Wings*." The drama was developed by Deborah and several colleagues for the 1988 Family Violence Prevention Month in Strathcona County and was subsequently performed in several communities in the province.

An increasing number of communities become involved in Family Violence Prevention Month each year. Following is a description of the 1990 activities that were reported to us. We know we have likely missed many. If your Family Violence Prevention Month activity was missed and you would like others to know about it, please give us a call.

Calgary

A symposium on the prevention of family violence was hosted by a group of *Calgary* agencies. (See "Did you Know?" page 2.)

City of *Calgary* Neighbourhoods Services Division staff were given an orientation session on family violence in October and then asked to stimulate community activities during November. Discussion groups for professionals and members of the public and other community agencies were organized. These activities have led to ongoing networking for events throughout the year. Information about family violence was included in the November mail-out of all City of *Calgary* utility bills.

The *Bow Valley* Committee on the Prevention of Family Violence supported a number of activities during the Month. In *Banff*, the focus was on dating violence. The *Banff* YWCA held a buffet luncheon for students and members of the public which featured a talk about date rape. Educators in *Exshaw* were shown videos on child abuse and provided with information by the Family-School Liaison Worker. Letters were mailed to service clubs, agencies and groups with information about available speakers. Brochures describing helpful resources were mailed to homes in the area. A media blitz was conducted and information display boards were set up in a variety of public places in *Banff* and *Canmore*. The Committee will be publishing the results of a "Main Street" survey conducted in *Canmore* and

Exshaw. This survey includes questions to high school students and people on the street about family violence and possible solutions. Committee members reported an increase in the number of people who disclosed their abuse and sought counseling during the Month.

The *Banff* RCMP Detachment held a workshop on the cooperative investigation of child sexual abuse for their staff and other professionals.

Edmonton

Two of *Edmonton's* major television stations, CBC TV and CFRN TV, broadcast features on wife abuse. City employees had a special presentation on child abuse. They were shown Shane McCabe's production titled "No Place like Home." Azimuth Theatre staged several performances of "Maelstrom," a play about abusive men, in Edmonton, St. Albert and Sherwood Park. The Grey Nuns Hospital had a display on family violence in their lobby. The Westwood Unitarian Church, the North American Bible College and Levi Strauss Canada Ltd. Manufacturing Company featured talks or displays during the Month.

A Youth Conference on Family Violence, organized by the County of Strathcona Family Violence Prevention Committee, was held in Sherwood Park. About 130 teens registered.

A conference for women held in *Bon Accord*, with compulsory sessions on family violence, attracted 90 participants. Other activities for Family Violence Prevention Month in the Edmonton region included a mall display in *St. Albert*; a workshop on the community's role in intervention in *Gibbons*; a training session for Home Support workers in *Fort Saskatchewan*; and a community meeting in *Beaumont*. Several articles on Family

Violence appeared in the Edmonton Sun, the Edmonton Journal and local weekly papers.

South

Lethbridge's Committee for the Prevention of Family Violence organized a number of activities during November. A series of films, dramas and discussions on various aspects of family violence was held in the Public Library. The library also held a training session on intervention for professionals. The Police Service included material on family violence in their community displays during Crime Prevention Week, November 8 to 10.

Workshops on child abuse were held in *Taber*. The Inter Act Theatre from Medicine Hat performed their drama "Breaking the Cycle" for school students and the public in Taber. These activities stimulated the formation of a support group for adult survivors of child sexual abuse.

Inter Act Theatre also performed their play in *Lethbridge, Medicine Hat* and other communities in the southern part of the province.

A display of family violence materials was set up in the Crescent Heights High School in *Medicine Hat* and all health teachers were provided with information.

Central

A novel fund-raising activity was held for the *Camrose* Women's Shelter during November. Mock arrests, incarceration and trials raised \$14,000 through "bail" payments with 200 pledges for additional payments.

In *Drumheller*, a number of activities were staged. The School Family Liaison worker presented information and facilitated discussions on dating violence for senior students and talked with younger students about youth related family violence issues.

The hospital staff participated in a teleconference training series entitled "Hitting Home: Family Violence Intervention Strategy." Local teachers attended a training session on the teacher's role in family violence. The session addressed how a teacher should handle a disclosure by a student who is either suffering abuse or who sees abuse among other family members.

Material was available in *Sylvan Lake* from the Safe Home Society. Alberta Mental Health Services and the Drumheller Family and Community Support Services teamed up to present a workshop in *Hanna* entitled "Abuse is Not the Answer." A *Wainwright* radio station hosted a talk show in cooperation with an abused women's support group member and a worker from the Camrose Women's Shelter.

Northwest

During November, Odyssey House, the women's shelter in *Grande Prairie*, used a variety of means to inform the community about its services. Candles were sold to raise funds. The play "Open the Closet Door" was performed for high school students in *Grande Prairie, Sexsmith* and *Beaverlodge*. Local radio stations promoted the Month and a display was held in a local mall.

In *Peace River*, the local newspaper, radio station and mall cooperated with the Peace Country Crisis Association in increasing awareness in the community.

The *High Level* Safe Home Network and the *Fort Vermilion* Family Violence Prevention Committee joined forces to present an information meeting and sale of crafts.

In *Falher*, a slide presentation and various church services focused on family violence.

Northeast

The community of *Bonnyville* proclaimed the Month with a banner in the town office and staged a number of events. The Native Friendship Centre hosted a Native Youth Conference which included sessions on family violence. The local high school featured sessions on dating violence. Mental Health Services presented a workshop for their staff on risk assessment for violence in families. The summer drama program on dating violence entitled "Back Street Blues" was performed again by popular demand.

The *St. Paul* radio station featured an open-line interview show with David Beale from Bonnyville F.C.S.S. and Joey Deary from the Dr. Margaret Savage Crisis Centre. The program was simulcast in *Cold Lake* and *Wainwright*.

A school children's poster contest was organized in *Fort McMurray*, from which a slogan or theme will be developed. A panel of community agency representatives discussing family violence was videotaped for continued use. The Canadian Mental Health Association held anger management workshops.

Lloydminster's local newspaper featured an eight page supplement on family violence. Interval Home, the women's shelter, held an open house. Later in the month, Interval Home conducted tours for junior and senior high school students. These students were given information about the shelter and dating violence.

Vegreville held the official opening ceremony for its demonstration crisis line.

Responding to the Abuse of People with Disabilities

by Cathy McPherson. Toronto: Advocacy Resource Centre for the Handicapped, 1990.

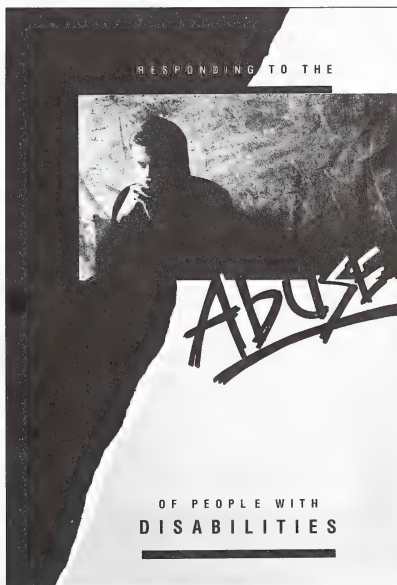
Review by Jean Bennett

During the past few years there has been increasing awareness of the extent to which people with disabilities have been and continue to be abused. Several major reports have been produced dealing with the vulnerability of people with disabilities to all forms of abuse. This, along with growth in advocacy movements for people with disabilities and increased participation in community life, has contributed to exposing the extent of the problem. This new publication by the Advocacy Resource Centre for the Handicapped, *Responding to the Abuse of People with Disabilities*, is an important step in identifying critical considerations in responding to abuse.

The manual does a good job of articulating why individuals with disabilities are so vulnerable to abuse.

The physical and emotional contact people with disabilities have with a large number of caregivers, puts them at greater risk for abuse than the majority of the population. Knowing the difference between normal/necessary forms of touching, and abuse, and learning how to protect themselves from inappropriate behaviour or unwanted touch, is essential to their survival. (p.2)

As with any other group that experiences abuse, one of the most important things for a person with a disability is to be listened to and treated seriously. Regardless of the nature of their disability they have a need for and right to support. No matter how they communicate, the majority of people with disabilities can explain what has happened to them if they are given support. The manual points out that only a small number of people lack the experience or knowledge to understand that they have



been victims of abuse.

However, most instances of abuse are never reported and very few of those that are reported get to court. For those individuals who do go to court, it is essential that they hear that going to court is a courageous act in itself. Given the difficulty of getting convictions, especially where the victim has a severe communication or cognitive disability, people must be supported for taking the risk of speaking out.

The manual will be most useful to people who are in a direct caregiving role. It provides straightforward, specific information on the justice system and how to deal with a situation of abuse. For someone with little knowledge of the legal procedures, the manual gives very precise instructions on how to respond, how abuse is defined legally, and the legal and ethical responsibility to report abuse. Although most service providers have agency protocols for dealing with abuse, the manual is a useful additional resource for information on the broader legal context.

The manual does raise important points on disability issues that can increase the awareness of those working in generic services; however, it does not provide enough concrete information on responding to different types of disabling conditions. For instance, incredible challenges are faced in enabling individuals with severe cognitive impairments or communication difficulties to give evidence. The manual, however, makes only general reference to responding to these needs.

Nonetheless, *Responding to the Abuse of People with Disabilities* is a good addition to the resource on abuse. Now, someone needs to produce a guide that addresses some of the harder challenges of supporting people with more severe disabilities to seek justice through the courts.

Jean Bennett is a Self Advocacy Advisor with the B.C. Association for the Community Living.*

Beating the "Odds": Violence and Women With Disabilities

This 45-page position paper prepared for DAWN (Disabled Women's Network) Canada respectfully acknowledged the participation of 245 women with disabilities who contributed to this study. Among other findings, this report addressed the high incidence of child sexual abuse among children with disabilities and explored the relationship between vulnerability to abuse with respect to women with multiple disabilities. A table of contents or index, however, would have facilitated locating specific information.

Copies of the report, *Beating the "Odds": Violence and Women With Disabilities*, are available for \$5.50 through: DAWN Canada, 4 Warner Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, M4A 1Z3, (416) 755-6060, FAX (416) 288-8147.

*Reprinted with permission from the author and B.C. Victims Services News.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September 14 – 17

Denver, Colorado

THE NINTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT: REAFFIRMING OUR ROOTS

CONTACT: Mickey Shumaker
The Ninth National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect
P.O. Box 1266
Denver, CO 80201-1266
(303) 792-9900

October 8 – 12

Calgary, Alberta

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF CRIME PREVENTION PRACTITIONERS

(14th Annual Conference)

CONTACT: Sgt. Ron Peterson
City of Calgary
Police Service
(403) 265-3330

October 9 – 11

Edmonton, Alberta

SEXUAL AGGRESSION SEXUAL HARASSMENT in Society, in the Workplace, in Professions

CONTACT: Paul McGee
Optimum Development
Services
Suite 5
12225 – 107 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5M 1Y9
(403) 488-6369
FAX (403) 482-1654

October 27 – 30, 1991

Toronto, Ontario

FOCUS ON CHILD ABUSE: STOP THE HURT SIXTH NATIONAL CONFERENCE

CONTACT: Professional Services
Institute for the Prevention
of Child Abuse
25 Spadina Road
Toronto, Ontario
M5R 2S9

Funding Continued from page 4

- favour a multidisciplinary approach and generally involve more than one profession;
- involve the community in design and/or implementation.

In an effort to promote a balanced response to family violence, priority will be given to projects in the following areas:

- **awareness, prevention and information;**
- **innovative new treatment/intervention** programs or the evaluation of existing programs;
- **training/education**, particularly of an interagency or interdisciplinary venture;
- **studies** on the nature, courses, incidence and consequences of the various forms of family violence.

Ongoing funding of existing services will not be considered.

Before submitting a formal proposal, interested applicants are encouraged to contact the relevant Federal Government ministry by phone or by submission of a 3 – 5 page proposal which includes a budget breakdown. Applicants will be offered additional guidance if necessary.

For general information about the initiative, contact the Family Violence Prevention Division, Social Services Program Branch, Health and Welfare Canada, Brooks Claxton Building, Tunney's Pasture, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 1B5, (613) 957-0622.

Specific contact names and phone numbers are available from the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence for initiatives in the areas of health and social services activities, programs for aboriginal people, criminal justice, housing programs and community action.

VIDEO REVIEW

One Hit Leads to Another

This 14 minute video produced by The Victoria Women's Transition House Society portrays dramatic scenes of spousal assault and its consequences. Interviews with victims and offenders add an impactful dimension to the production which was jointly funded by: The Law Foundation of British Columbia; Health & Welfare Canada; Solicitor General of British Columbia; Legal Services Society of British Columbia; Attorney General Department of British Columbia.

For further information, contact The Victoria Women's Transition House, P.O. Box 5986, Station B, Victoria, British Columbia, V8R 6S8, (604) 385-6611 or The Office for the Prevention of Family Violence.



**VICTORIA
WOMEN'S
TRANSITION
HOUSE**

FOCUS IS A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE OFFICE FOR THE PREVENTION OF FAMILY VIOLENCE. SUBMISSIONS FOR THE FUTURE ISSUES, ESPECIALLY NEWS ABOUT THE COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES, ARE WELCOME. TO PUT YOUR NAME ON THE MAILING LIST OR FOR ADDITIONAL COPIES, CONTACT THE OFFICE. ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO:

THE OFFICE FOR THE PREVENTION OF
FAMILY VIOLENCE
ALBERTA FAMILY AND SOCIAL SERVICES
11TH FLOOR, SEVENTH STREET PLAZA
10030 107 STREET
EDMONTON, ALBERTA T5J 3E4
PHONE (403)422-5916 FAX (403)427-2039



Alberta
FAMILY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

FOCUS

NEWSLETTER FOR THE OFFICE FOR THE PREVENTION OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

Abuse of persons with disabilities: A growing awareness

Abuse of persons with disabilities is a subject that is rarely discussed. This may be because many people find the idea unthinkable and have therefore not even considered the possibility that it exists in our society.

While there have been very few research studies of this problem, anecdotal evidence leaves no doubt that it does exist. Persons with disabilities, children, women and men, are all subjected to the same types of abuse as other persons that do not have disabilities; including physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and other kinds of exploitation.

One of the reasons that it is so difficult to detect the prevalence of abuse of persons with disabilities is that the victims rarely report their own abuse. Sometimes they are unable to report and, probably more frequently, are reluctant to report incidences. They may be unable to tell anyone about what has happened, or is happening, to them because of the nature of their disability. Communicating may be difficult, and it may be almost impossible to describe their experience to another person. If they are developmentally disabled, they may not understand that they are indeed being abused; they may not understand that what is happening to them is unacceptable.

Being dependent on the person who is abusing them may inhibit reporting of abuse. They may fear abandonment or withdrawal of services, or in some cases, retaliation or further abuse.

Persons with disabilities, like all other victims of abuse, are most often abused by someone they know. This might be a family member, a care-giver in the victim's residence, or a professional with



whom they have some contact as a patient or client. There are more than 13,000 persons with disabilities in Alberta who are dependent on others for some aspect of their personal care. Add to this, all those who require some kind of help with other daily living tasks.

The dependency that is necessarily created because of a disability makes disabled persons very vulnerable. Those who are physically disabled are unable to protect themselves, nor can they readily escape from potential or actual physical abuse. Those who cannot communicate are unable to call out or tell someone about their situation.

While this paints a bleak picture of this issue, all is not gloom and doom. There is progress being made in creating awareness of the problem, and in seeking and activating solutions.

In Alberta, the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities is working hard to change the way people think about persons with disabilities. A Vision Paper released in 1989 stressed the need for "transformational changes in public attitudes and public policy." The government endorsed the Vision Paper and an Action Plan was developed by the Council which contained many recommendations for bringing about some of those "transformational changes." More importantly, the report reminded us that Alberta's Individual Rights Protection Act states that no person or class of persons can be denied "any accommodation, services, or facilities customarily available to the public." (p.43)

Advocates for persons with disabilities appreciate the progress made over the past few years in decreasing some of the barriers to physical mobility but recognize that abused, disabled people need more than just physical access to services.

Dick Sobsey is a University of Alberta professor who is studying sexual and physical abuse of disabled people. He recommended that the Premier's Council look at the possibility of having advocates who would speak on behalf of institutionalized disabled people in reporting abuse. Sobsey believes that mandatory reporting of abuse in institutions is essential, along with services providers being protected against administrative retribution. Consumers of services, he adds, should not have services by the agency interrupted if abuse is reported.

On the federal front, Rix Rogers, special advisor on child sexual abuse to the Minister of National Health and Welfare, presented his Reaching for Solutions report

AUG 26 1991

to the Minister in June, 1990. The report offered recommendations to the Federal Government on matters concerning the sexual abuse of children. Recommendation 71 calls for a special task force committee to begin studying the needs of children in high risk groups. Federal response was positive and indicated that priority for family violence initiative funding will be given to projects aimed at children in high risk groups.

An April, 1990 report, titled *Working Together for Women's Health: A framework for the development of policies and programs* also addressed the problem of abuse of persons with disabilities.

"As a minority, and amongst the poorest of all Canadians, women with disabilities encounter significant barriers to obtaining quality health services. Organizations such as Disabled Women's Network (DAWN Canada) and the Coalition of Provincial Organizations of the Handicapped have been instrumental in raising public awareness about issues affecting women with disabilities."

The report goes on to state that more and more evidence is emerging that points to the fact that women with disabilities experience more violence against them than women without disabilities in their lifetime, "often from those who are in charge of their care."

Few services for assaulted women are available to women with disabilities and, as victims of violence, some say they experience worse treatment from the medical profession than able bodied women.

High risk disabled individuals and anyone who has involvement with disabled persons should take note of recent court outcomes in Sherwood Park, Alberta. Two years ago, the Sherwood Park RCMP dealt with eight cases of reported abuse of disabled individuals ranging in age from eight to 30. Of these cases, six convictions were made. Although Corporal Walter Coles of the Sherwood Park detachment cautions that this was an exceptionally "successful" year that may not soon be repeated, the outcome of these cases undoubtedly buoyed the spirits of those working towards justice for persons with disabilities.

These positive changes are brought about, in part, by the efforts of the disabled and their advocates who are bringing these issues to light.

Other positives include:

- Programs developed similar to the ones that teach children to recognize the differences between "good" and "bad" touches are now available for developmentally disabled persons.
- Some self defence programs have also been developed for disabled persons.
- As a result of the work done by DAWN and other advocacy groups for persons with disabilities, increasing numbers of health and social service facilities are incorporating renovation into their budgets to improve accessibility.

- A status of Disabled Persons Secretariat has been set up within the Department of the Secretary of State with similar provincial offices across the country.
- Attitudes about persons with disabilities, and specifically those who have been abused, are slowly starting to change. These positive changes are brought about, in part, by the efforts of the disabled and their advocates who are bringing these issues to light.
- The first step in a comprehensive long-term commitment to achieving full participation of disabled Albertans in Alberta was announced in May of this year. A status report outlining actions taken by the provincial government in implementing the recommendations in the Action Plan developed by the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities was released. Highlights from the report include:
 - establishment of a Community Support Task Force to plan for a coordinated, consolidated and comprehensive approach to the delivery of personal supports for persons with disabilities; and
 - changes to the Building Code to ensure that all buildings are barrier-free, to be announced by Alberta Minister of Labour, Elaine McCoy.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Family violence will be the theme of the Alberta Medical Association's half day program held at their Annual General Meeting, October 11th in Edmonton.
- The American National Coalition Against Domestic Violence ran a full page color advertisement in the April 18th edition of Esquire magazine acknowledging that nearly 4,000 women die each year from beatings. The large type caption reads, "He beat her 150 times. She only got flowers once!"
- The March 1991 edition of "Law Now" has devoted its entire journal to family violence. Articles include information on children in court, and defining abuse of the elderly in institutions, plus an extensive bibliography on family violence publications. For more information contact: Law Now, Legal Resource Centre, (403) 492-5732.
- An update on Bill C-15 decisions was published in October, 1990 by The Institute for the Prevention of Child Abuse. This 12 page booklet provides recent court rulings with respect to the qualification of child witnesses, credibility of child witnesses, expert testimony, video taping, use of screen and closed circuit television and sexual exploitation. Copies are available for \$2.00 each from Publications Assistant, The Institute for the Prevention of Child Abuse, 25 Spadina Road, Toronto, Ontario, M5R 2S9, (416) 921-3151.
- **EMERGE**, a men's counselling service on domestic violence in America, has developed public service announcements currently playing in five American cities. Productions also include a pamphlet entitled "What You Should Know About Your Violent Partner," a checklist on violent and controlling behaviours, and bumper stickers proclaiming "Another Man Against Violence Against Women." For more information, contact Emerge at 18 Hurley Street, Suite 23, Cambridge, MA 02141, (617) 267-7690.
- ADT Security Systems has developed a silent electronic alarm which can easily be activated if one is attacked. A pilot

project presently in progress in Winnipeg is monitoring the effectiveness of this device. When the alarm signal is activated, ADT will receive the call and immediately notify police. Winnipeg District Manager, Barry Perrin, hopes this initiative will spread across Canada. (The Halifax Chronicle-Herald)

- The Solicitor General's Office, through its new Victims' Program Assistance Fund, is making grant money available to organizations that provide programs or services to victims of an offence. The primary source of funding is through surcharges when a fine is assessed on Criminal Code, Narcotic Control Act and Food and Drug Act offenses. The next deadline for application is September 1. Further information and application forms may be obtained from Victims Programs and Services, Alberta Solicitor General, Law Enforcement Division, 10th Floor, John E. Brownlee Building, 10365 - 97 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T5J 3W7, (403) 427-3460, FAX (403) 427-5916.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Northeast

- In Lloydminster, Interval House will be expanding its ongoing program to interested non-residents. Through the support of Family and Social Services and corporate donations, programs such as positive parenting and self-esteem building for women, are offered on a continual basis. Child care and transportation are provided.
- The Fort McMurray FCSS has established a year round committee planning process which will address family violence issues on a continual basis.
- The Saddle Lake Boys and Girls Club will develop workshops on sexuality

issues for teens and parents. As well, peer support groups for preteens and teens will be offered which will examine personal abuse issues and encourage healthy assertive behaviour.

Northwest

- Whitecourt's Wellspring Women's Resource Centre has two facilitators running a new support group for women which addresses issues of concern pertaining to self-esteem, conflict resolution, spousal abuse and family violence.
- Project Awareness in Grande Prairie has produced a social action drama for teens

which continues to be in demand. "Open the Closet Door," a play addressing teen dating violence, has been performed in the City and County of Grande Prairie high schools, increasing the likelihood that more performances will be held in the future.

- The Metis Indian Teen Alcohol Association, along with the High Prairie and District Youth Action Program, will put on six dramatic presentations on family violence.

Central

- The County of Paintearth FCSS, along with interagency members such as

RCMP, AADAC and health units, have decided to make 1991 the year that focuses on family violence. Three full day workshops have been planned for Consort, Coronation and Castor on the different aspects of family violence. This will culminate in a three part drama series to be held during family violence prevention month.

- The Stettler Society for Prevention of Family Violence will expand its volunteer driver system to better serve the communities east to the Saskatchewan border. This program provides transportation and support for women going to Camrose or Red Deer shelters.
- A male speakers bureau that will address family violence issues will be established by the Red Deer Family Services Bureau.

Calgary

- The final report of the Calgary Mayor's Task Force on Community and Family Violence was completed in March. Some of the 62 recommendations offered in this report included the areas of social program funding, the coordination of funding and services, abuse in the family, youth and violence and male related issues.

- A trade fair was held in Cochrane May 4-5 where a display booth provided information on family violence. Also, the first community resource directory for local services has been delivered to Cochrane residents. Plans are underway to establish a Victim Assistance Program in the local RCMP detachment.
- A group support program for immigrant families at risk of abuse will be introduced by the Calgary Immigrant Aid Society this year.
- The YWCA Support Centre in Calgary are developing a conflict resolution program for children who have witnessed or experienced violence.
- A series of workshops for professional men will be offered through the Bow Valley Women's Resource Centre in Banff. In addition, a workshop retreat for male teens with the focus on prevention of abusive situations will also be held through the Resource Centre.

Edmonton

- The Mayor's Task Force on Safer Cities Sub Committee on Family Violence released their report in May. Included in the report were 32 actions recommended in the areas of education, criminal justice system, services,

coordination and aboriginal concerns.

- Both the Yellowhead Emergency Shelter for Women Society and the YWCA Housing Program have developed or collected resources dealing with domestic violence.
- The Nobody's Perfect parenting program in Hinton offered three complete sessions within the past year.
- Workshops focusing on family violence and healthy lifestyles will be developed and facilitated at the Canadian Native Friendship Centre in Edmonton.

South

- Lethbridge Community College held their "Completing the Circle" conference in February and found the family violence session presented by members of the FCSS and RCMP to have the greatest number of participants in the 24 workshops offered. Rix Rogers, Acting Executive Director for the Canadian Child Welfare Association, provided the keynote address on his Reaching for Solutions report on child sexual abuse.
- The Barons-Eureka-Warner Family and Community Support Services in Coaldale will train community volunteers to offer support and referral services to "at risk" families.

New Funding Available

In the past few months many of you have heard about new federal funding available for family violence initiatives. You have likely wondered exactly what the funding was for, who can apply, and where you can find out more about it. Let us tell you what we know.

In February of this year the Honourable Perrin Beatty, Minister of Health and Welfare, Canada announced the Federal Initiative on Family Violence. This initiative calls upon all Canadians to accept individual responsibility for the prevention of family violence. Over the next four years, \$136 Million in new funding is being made available for a variety of initiatives involving six federal departments and agencies, in partnership with

other levels of government, professional associations and concerned organizations in the community.

Family violence refers to child abuse, violence against women, elder abuse and the abuse of people with disabilities. The initiative will address these forms of violence on seven fronts:

- involving all Canadians in mobilizing community action;
- strengthening Canada's legal framework;
- establishing services in Indian reserves and Inuit communities;
- strengthening Canada's ability to help victims and stop offenders;
- more housing for abused women and their children;

- better national information on the extent and nature of family violence;
- sharing information and solutions.

Except for individuals, for-profit groups and Crown corporations, any organization may apply for funding. Applications will be accepted at any time over the next four years, with funding terminating on March 31, 1995.

The Federal Government is working to "expand the circle of partners already involved in this important issue." With this in mind, it will support community projects which:

- directly benefit or impact a region;
- might be used as models for other communities or have national impact;

continued on page 6

BOOK REVIEWS

Responding to the Abuse of People with Disabilities

by Cathy McPherson. Toronto: Advocacy Resource Centre for the Handicapped, 1990.

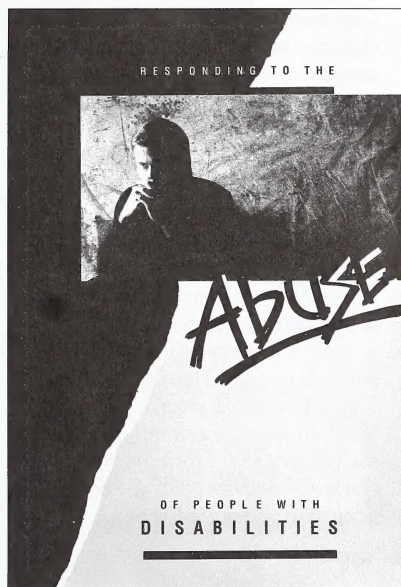
Review by Jean Bennett

During the past few years there has been increasing awareness of the extent to which people with disabilities have been and continue to be abused. Several major reports have been produced dealing with the vulnerability of people with disabilities to all forms of abuse. This, along with growth in advocacy movements for people with disabilities and increased participation in community life, has contributed to exposing the extent of the problem. This new publication by the Advocacy Resource Centre for the Handicapped, *Responding to the Abuse of People with Disabilities*, is an important step in identifying critical considerations in responding to abuse.

The manual does a good job of articulating why individuals with disabilities are so vulnerable to abuse.

The physical and emotional contact people with disabilities have with a large number of caregivers, puts them at greater risk for abuse than the majority of the population. Knowing the difference between normal/necessary forms of touching, and abuse, and learning how to protect themselves from inappropriate behaviour or unwanted touch, is essential to their survival. (p.2)

As with any other group that experiences abuse, one of the most important things for a person with a disability is to be listened to and treated seriously. Regardless of the nature of their disability they have a need for and right to support. No matter how they communicate, the majority of people with disabilities can explain what has happened to them if they are given support. The manual points out that only a small number of people lack the experience or knowledge to understand that they have



been victims of abuse.

However, most instances of abuse are never reported and very few of those that are reported get to court. For those individuals who do go to court, it is essential that they hear that going to court is a courageous act in itself. Given the difficulty of getting convictions, especially where the victim has a severe communication or cognitive disability, people must be supported for taking the risk of speaking out.

The manual will be most useful to people who are in a direct caregiving role. It provides straightforward, specific information on the justice system and how to deal with a situation of abuse. For someone with little knowledge of the legal procedures, the manual gives very precise instructions on how to respond, how abuse is defined legally, and the legal and ethical responsibility to report abuse. Although most service providers have agency protocols for dealing with abuse, the manual is a useful additional resource for information on the broader legal context.

The manual does raise important points on disability issues that can increase the awareness of those working in generic services; however, it does not provide enough concrete information on responding to different types of disabling conditions. For instance, incredible challenges are faced in enabling individuals with severe cognitive impairments or communication difficulties to give evidence. The manual, however, makes only general reference to responding to these needs.

Nonetheless, *Responding to the Abuse of People with Disabilities* is a good addition to the resource on abuse. Now, someone needs to produce a guide that addresses some of the harder challenges of supporting people with more severe disabilities to seek justice through the courts.

Jean Bennett is a Self Advocacy Advisor with the B.C. Association for the Community Living.*

Beating the "Odds": Violence and Women With Disabilities

This 45-page position paper prepared for DAWN (Disabled Women's Network) Canada respectfully acknowledged the participation of 245 women with disabilities who contributed to this study. Among other findings, this report addressed the high incidence of child sexual abuse among children with disabilities and explored the relationship between vulnerability to abuse with respect to women with multiple disabilities. A table of contents or index, however, would have facilitated locating specific information.

Copies of the report, *Beating the "Odds": Violence and Women With Disabilities*, are available for \$5.50 through: DAWN Canada, 4 Warner Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, M4A 1Z3, (416) 755-6060, FAX (416) 288-8147.

*Reprinted with permission from the author and B.C. Victims Services News.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September 14 – 17

Denver, Colorado

THE NINTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT: REAFFIRMING OUR ROOTS

CONTACT: Mickey Shumaker

The Ninth National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect
P.O. Box 1266
Denver, CO 80201-1266
(303) 792-9900

October 8 – 12

Calgary, Alberta

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF CRIME PREVENTION PRACTITIONERS

(14th Annual Conference)

CONTACT: Sgt. Ron Peterson

City of Calgary
Police Service
(403) 265-3330

October 9 – 11

Edmonton, Alberta

SEXUAL AGGRESSION SEXUAL HARASSMENT in Society, in the Workplace, in Professions

CONTACT: Paul McGee

Optimum Development Services
Suite 5
12225 – 107 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5M 1Y9
(403) 488-6369
FAX (403) 482-1654

October 27 – 30, 1991

Toronto, Ontario

FOCUS ON CHILD ABUSE: STOP THE HURT SIXTH NATIONAL CONFERENCE

CONTACT: Professional Services

Institute for the Prevention of Child Abuse
25 Spadina Road
Toronto, Ontario
M5R 2S9

Funding Continued from page 4

- favour a multidisciplinary approach and generally involve more than one profession;
- involve the community in design and/or implementation.

In an effort to promote a balanced response to family violence, priority will be given to projects in the following areas:

- **awareness, prevention and information;**
- **innovative new treatment/intervention** programs or the evaluation of existing programs;
- **training/education**, particularly of an interagency or interdisciplinary venture;
- **studies** on the nature, courses, incidence and consequences of the various forms of family violence.

Ongoing funding of existing services will not be considered.

Before submitting a formal proposal, interested applicants are encouraged to contact the relevant Federal Government ministry by phone or by submission of a 3 – 5 page proposal which includes a budget breakdown. Applicants will be offered additional guidance if necessary.

For general information about the initiative, contact the Family Violence Prevention Division, Social Services Program Branch, Health and Welfare Canada, Brooks Claxton Building, Tunney's Pasture, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 1B5, (613) 957-0622.

Specific contact names and phone numbers are available from the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence for initiatives in the areas of health and social services activities, programs for aboriginal people, criminal justice, housing programs and community action.

VIDEO REVIEW

One Hit Leads to Another

This 14 minute video produced by The Victoria Women's Transition House Society portrays dramatic scenes of spousal assault and its consequences. Interviews with victims and offenders add an impactful dimension to the production which was jointly funded by: The Law Foundation of British Columbia; Health & Welfare Canada; Solicitor General of British Columbia; Legal Services Society of British Columbia; Attorney General Department of British Columbia.

For further information, contact The Victoria Women's Transition House, P.O. Box 5986, Station B, Victoria, British Columbia, V8R 6S8, (604) 385-6611 or The Office for the Prevention of Family Violence.



**VICTORIA
WOMEN'S
TRANSITION
HOUSE**

FOCUS IS A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE OFFICE FOR THE PREVENTION OF FAMILY VIOLENCE. SUBMISSIONS FOR THE FUTURE ISSUES, ESPECIALLY NEWS ABOUT THE COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES, ARE WELCOME. TO PUT YOUR NAME ON THE MAILING LIST OR FOR ADDITIONAL COPIES, CONTACT THE OFFICE. ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO:

**THE OFFICE FOR THE PREVENTION OF
FAMILY VIOLENCE
ALBERTA FAMILY AND SOCIAL SERVICES
11TH FLOOR, SEVENTH STREET PLAZA
10030 107 STREET
EDMONTON, ALBERTA T5J 3E4
PHONE (403)422-5916 FAX (403)427-2039**



